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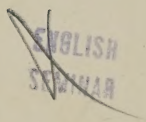

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CHARLES KINGSLEY.

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CHARLES KINGSLEY

THE WORK AND INFLUENCE OF PARSON LOT

By W. HENRY BROWN

ILLUSTRATED

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FOREWORD

IN presenting this story of Charles Kingsley, mainly in his " Parson Lot " period, I have been fortunate in the friendship of the late J. M. Ludlow and also personal acquaintance with some of the sons and daughters of other members of the group of Christian Socialists of 1848. Their conversation, notes, and letters have helped to an understanding judgment of the biographies and histories that have been written, from many points of view.

Present-day rectors of parishes associated with the Kingsley family have assisted to trace the childhood of Charles—so scantily sketched by Mrs. Kingsley in her " Memories and Letters," and this new matter is supplemented by impressions gained, as a guest, in the rectory of Eversley. Here one has lived in the atmosphere of the man who made it his home for 33 years, and was able to realise its quiet and calm—and to feel something of the solace it must have given Parson Lot when combating the wrongs of the Cities of the Plain.

The authorities of the Working Men's College have accorded access to documents, memorials, and volumes that belonged to Kingsley and Maurice. My friend of twenty years, Mr. T. W. Mercer, has, in a spirit of helpfulness, allowed me the use of his collection of the ephemeral literature of the Owenite, Chartist, and Christian Socialist movements. A study of the tracts, pamphlets, reports, journals and other publications, in

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their original issues, has thrown a fresh light on some matters of concern to co-operation and other movements of our time. Others who have assisted are mentioned in the text or footnotes.

To all these, the thanks.
To the reader, the book—

just a few chapters in the complete biography yet to come.

1924. W. H. B.

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CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLAND OF KINGSLEY'S CHILDHOOD.

MORE than a century has passed since Charles Kingsley came into a world of Competition and Care. Our industrial life was very new when he was born; and the old family relationship between "master and man" was only just beginning to topple before that Manchester School, "from whom," he fervently prayed, in 1852, "Heaven defend us." The year of his birth, 1819, was the year of Peterloo. Working men were charged by the military—as young Kingsley found for himself when, from his school at Clifton, he saw the Bristol Reform Riots in 1831, and got his "first lesson in social science." And they were charged by the police when they combined in trade societies. Imprisonment and deportation were the main educational measures their rulers had devised, until the Combination Acts were repealed in 1824.

Historians like J. R. Green, W. N. Molesworth, David Hume, and Justin McCarthy have depicted the harshness, the privations, and the cruelty of the unsocial life of the period. Charles Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell exposed the horrible beginnings of the nineteenth century when, according to Arnold Toynbee, the problem of pauperism came upon men in its most terrible form. Dr. Arnold wrote to Carlyle in 1840 that "the state of society in England was not yet paralleled in history"; and through his German

spectacles, Frederich Engels saw the "Condition of the Labouring Classes in 1844" in such shabby garb that his description revealed their nakedness and misery to Englishmen who were beginning to think hunger was a necessity of existence.

Byron, in 1812, told his fellow-members in the House of Lords that he had been in some of the most oppressed provinces of Turkey, "but never under the most despotic of infidel governments did I behold such squalid wretchedness as I have seen since my return to the very heart of a Christian country." Samuel Bamford, in Lancashire, heard of riots in far-away Devonshire in 1815 on account of the high price of bread, and records in his "Life of a Radical," that "at Biddeford (note the spelling of the little town Kingsley subsequently made prosperous) there were similar disturbances to prevent the exportation of grain." Then Thomas Hood sang "The Song of the Shirt," and Mrs. Browning's "Cry of the Children" wailed into the chorus of humanity. Not till 1845 did England discover her "two nations—the Rich and Poor"; it was Disraeli who rendered her that service in "Sybil," which pictured the struggles of the working classes when "the back streets of the manufacturing towns swarmed with small shops in which the worst of everything was sold with unchecked measures and unproved weights."*

Towards the end of the era popular orators thrilled their audiences with stories of the beginning of the age, and at the centenary of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, in 1897, Lord Rosebery recalled that "in Manchester about the year 1840 in one district there

* "Progress of the Working Class, 1832–1867," by J. M. Ludlow and Lloyd Jones.

were two thousand families without a bed among them, and there were eight thousand persons whose weekly income only averaged one-and-twopence halfpenny."* That was the "horrible catastrophe of a Manchester ascendancy"† against which Parson Lot waged conflict without swerving, as he wrote to Tom Hughes in 1852 :

"from my one idea of the last seven years, that the real battle of the time is—if England is to be saved from anarchy and unbelief, and utter exhaustion caused by the competitive enslavement of the masses—not Radical or Whig against Peelite or Tory, but the Church, the gentleman, and the workman, against the shopkeepers and the Manchester school. The battle could not have been fought forty years ago, because, on one side, the Church was an idle phantasm, the gentleman too ignorant, the workman too merely animal ; while, on the other, the Manchester cotton-spinners were all Tories, and the shopkeepers were a distinct class interest from theirs. But now these two latter have united, and the sublime incarnation of shopkeeping and labour-buying in the cheapest market shines forth in the person of Nebuchadnezzar & Son, and both cotton-spinners and shopkeepers say 'This is the man,' and join in one common press to defend his system."‡

In such utterances as these Kingsley showed that he had the gift of prophecy. "Shop-keeping and labour buying in the cheapest market" are still the signs of national progress as calculated by the political economists and the great captains of commerce. They overlook the human element in the perfection of their systems of efficiency and business expansion.

Merchant :

"I bought it on speculation—I must live—
I get my bread by buying corn that's cheap,
And selling where 'tis dearest. Mass, you need it,
And you must pay according to your need."

Kingsley's "The Saint's Tragedy," Act II, Sc. VII.

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* "Life of Mrs. Gaskell," by Mrs. Chadwick.

† "Manchester" must be liberally interpreted as indicating the system which raised the industrial population of Lancashire from 672,000 to 1,052,000 in the 20 years preceding the birth of Kingsley.

The story of these years may also be learned from "The Hungry Forties : Life under the Bread Tax," which was first published by T. Fisher Unwin in 1904. Its illuminating introduction by Mrs. Cobden Unwin remains a powerful picture of the conditions which her father and his friends effectively brightened.

‡ Letter quoted by Mrs. Kingsley, Vol. I of "Letters and Memories."

CHAPTER II.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF KINGSLEY.

Fighting the Devil.

PEERING into the problems that darkened the mid-Victorian period we see Kingsley rushing full tilt at the indifference of those who should have been the Prophets and Deliverers of their race. He was an inciting and exciting influence, rather than a diplomatic leader; a stimulating, energising force, quickening public opinion into action, and awakening the sluggish conscience into spiritual restiveness. Into the smug complacency growing out of the combination of commercial expansion with patronising philanthropy Kingsley sent piercing shafts. There was too general a belief that "mankind only wants to be told the way to the millennium to walk willingly into it—which is a lie." And so Parson Lot wrote to the editor of the *Christian Socialist*, J. M. Ludlow :—

"It seems to me that in such a time as this the only way to fight against the devil is to attack him. He has got it too much his own way to meddle with us if we don't meddle with him. But the very devil has feelings, and if you prick him, will roar . . . whereby you, at all events, gain the not-every-day-of-the-week-to-be-attained benefit of finding out where he is. Unless, indeed, as I suspect, the old rascal plays ventriloquist (as big grasshoppers do when you chase them) and puts you on a wrong scent, by crying 'Fire!' out of saints' windows. Still, the odds are if you prick lustily enough, you make him roar unawares."

No wonder that Kingsley became a storm centre in the social hurricane that followed the Chartist fizzle of 1848. Even J. A. Froude—whom Kingsley lodged and

befriended when his own family and University turned against the future historian—wrote to a friend, "Kingsley is such a fine fellow. I almost wish, though, he wouldn't write and talk Chartism and be always in such a stringent excitement about it all. He dreams of nothing but barricades and provisional governments and grand Smithfield bonfires, where the landlords are all roasting in the fat of their own prize oxen. He is so musical and beautiful in poetry and so rough and harsh in prose, and he doesn't know the least that it is because in the first the art is carrying him out of himself and making him forget just for a little that the age is so entirely out of joint."* Until he saw that the passing of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1852, gave the working people a fair field in which to work out their own economic salvation, Kingsley was consumed by the one idea of battling against the prevalent notions of free competition and *laissez faire*. He was anxious to "let the men fight their own battle," but he wanted "to see that they have, as far as we can get at them, a clear stage and no favour." And so he rushed headlong and headstrong among his fellows.

He fought with heroic zest encouraging the legal minds about him to take risks that savoured of chivalry for distressed needlewomen and slop-workers. His conscience was his dictator. When he erred it was the mistake of sincerity—and his manliness covered a multitude of foibles and a few bigger follies. He was genuinely English, and shockingly human—so true, so brave, so impetuous when wrongs were to be righted; so valiant and so considerate where women were concerned; so helpful a father and so good a husband;

* "Life of J. A. Froude," by Herbert Paul.

so fully attached to the traditions of his country, and so long-visioned among the shortsighted order in which he was nurtured. But when he saw the children dying in the fever dens of Bermondsey before they had a glimpse of the beauty that should have been their natural environment he thundered against the profiteering landlords and official Tadpoles with a fierceness that surpassed Professor Huxley. The latter spent some time in Rotherhithe in 1841, and wondered "why these people did not sally forth in mass and get a few hours' eating and drinking and plunder to their heart's content before the police could stop and hang a few of them. But the poor wretches had not the heart even for that."* Kingsley sought to give them heart.

"The church bells were ringing, the devil sat singing
On the stump of a rotting old tree;
'Oh faith it grows cold, and the creeds they grow old,
And the world is nigh ready for me.'

"The bells went on ringing, a spirit came singing,
And smiled as he crumbled the tree;
'Yon wood does but perish new seedlings to cherish,
And the world is too live yet for thee.'"

Kingsley's "A Parable from Liebig," 1848

* "Huxley—Life and Letters."

His Generous Fighting Force.

Kingsley shook off the elemental wings with which Mrs. Kingsley adorned him in her "Letters and Memories" and became a tempestuous knight-errant flaming to a white heat against those fellow-parsons who taught that disease was a visitation of God. How he trounced the thoughtless mass of humanity that bought sweated goods and never asked where its clothes were made! To a critical contemporary he seemed a warrior always panting for battle—like the Red Indian who "wields his tomahawk with an unbaptized heartiness, slightly heathenish, no doubt, but, withal, unspeakably refreshing."*

Sometimes even F. D. Maurice thought it well to tone down his pungent, poignant manner of writing; and when Parson Lot's vigorous onslaughts provoked letters of protest, he wrote to Ludlow explaining that he had stopped Kingsley's tale, the "Nun's Pool," from appearing in *Politics for the People*, and had urged him to reconsider his letter to the Chartists on the principle that it was "a duty to deny oneself in a number of strong piquant phrases that one likes rather than run counter to those earnest and deliberate convictions of other men, upon the preservation and enlightening of which all our hope of doing them good depends." Kingsley accepted the rebuke in the most Christian spirit. As Matthew Arnold wrote to Miss Kingsley when her father was near unto death, "he was the most generous man I have ever known; the most forward to praise what he thought good; the most willing to admire; the most free from all thought of himself in praising and admiring, and the

* W. R. Greg's "Literary and Social Judgments," Vol. 1.

most incapable of being made ill-natured or even indifferent by having to support ill-natured attacks upon himself."*

Kingsley revealed that trait in his own letter to Mrs. Gaskell on the publication of her "Ruth" when he wrote praising its "beauty and righteousness" and praying "may God bless you, and help you to write many more such books as you have already written" —a rare form of benediction from one author to another.

When his friend Ludlow sought the prosecution of Swinburne after the publication of "Poems and Ballads" in 1866,† it did not prevent Kingsley, at the dinner of the Royal Literary Fund, responding to a toast along with Swinburne and paying tribute to the latter's greatness in literature. He refrained on this occasion from what Prof. Saintsbury has described as his "unfortunate tendency to 'trail coats' of the most inconceivably different colours for others to tread upon"—a piece of criticism based on a lack of recognition of Kingsley's mission in life.

Maurice he regarded as erring if in anything only in humility. Truly Kingsley was a lovable man although always living at a high pressure—which exhausted his life long before the Psalmist's toll of years—and, working with the farmers and labourers in his parish, encouraging young working folks to obtain knowledge, lecturing young ladies on their duties as the future mothers of the race, or contributing, with the intellectual leaders of the Christian Socialists of 1848, to the sanity and salvation of the age, he proved that he could

* "Matthew Arnold's Letters."

† See "Life of A. C. Swinburne," by Edmund Gosse. Mr. Gosse informs the author that he possesses papers showing that the poet was "exceedingly incensed" with Ludlow.

co-operate with others. That, after all, is the real test that establishes his position as a true Democrat. Democracy frequently develops the autocrat; but Kingsley, the aristocrat, worked with and alongside others, on terms of equality and with a deference that was genuine. And yet, among his associates, his brilliance shone like the many facets of a diamond—for he was Preacher, Poet, Novelist, Professor, Pioneer, expounder of Natural Science, Sportsman, Sanitarian, Housing Reformer, and Co-operator. All these titles can be applied to one who called a materialistic generation to the Brotherhood that distinguishes the higher from the lower animals. J. A. Symonds, who saw him when he presided over the Education Section of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science at Bristol, in 1869, testified to the influence he wielded. Writing to Henry Sidgwick, he said, "Kingsleiolatreia was rampant. He seemed to me, spite of ranting and raging and foaming and swelling himself to twice his natural dimensions, or perhaps because of all this, to be the right man in the right place. He made an impression on masses"*—a tribute from a contemporary as to the influence that Kingsley wielded in his day.

"Forth all my being bubbles into song;
And rings aloft, not smooth, yet clear and strong."
—C. K.

* See "Letters of John Addington Symonds."

His Influence on Young Men.

Kingsley was not a specialist in anything. He was an earnest and understanding amateur in a great many things. But his generalisations were mostly true —and his conclusions were generally the end of things. There was a buoyancy in his outlook, and a grim earnestness was his backbone. He gave an impetus to the youth of his day—and he warned the fossils of their prison-house of stone. Walter Besant, whose "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" presents Kingsleyan ideals with his own urbanity, has recorded that when he was at Cambridge the prophets of the undergraduates were Tennyson, Carlyle, Maurice, and Kingsley. Those who at one-and-twenty pored over their works became distinctly Socialists, "not such gentry as bawl the Gospel of Destruction but Socialists of the highest type, to whom nothing of humanity is common or unclean. Charles Kingsley was filled with this spirit, and I have never read him since my undergraduate days lest I should have lost anything of my old love for the man who wrote 'Hypatia' and 'Alton Locke.'"* Something of the influence he exerted on the men of his age is indicated in the enthusiasm with which Sir Victor Horsley as a young man read with his sister "above all, Kingsley's 'Yeast,' 'Two Years Ago,' and 'Health and Education.'"† They put themselves heart and soul under Kingsley's authority. And David Gray, the poet friend of Robert Buchanan, whose tragic life is typical of many such, strove to leave his testimony to the world in a poem "leavening it with the pure and beautiful theology of Kingsley."‡ Finally, when, in

* Walter Besant in "The Review of Reviews," September, 1893.
† "Sir Victor Horsley's Life," by Stephen Paget.
‡ "Life of Robert Buchanan," by Harriet Jay.

his 92nd year, Frederic Harrison was writing his last message to his age, he bore witness that "from 1850 to 1875 Kingsley's Songs, Tracts, Novels, and Sermons were a real inspiration to the younger men of academic training who were entering on professional life in the church, in law, in politics, and in business." While the working men regarded him as a sympathetic advocate of their rights the best of the middle classes were mellowed by his regard for those less fortunately placed. Frederic Harrison thought of him "as the Camille Desmoulins of our own Labour revolution—the same audacity, fire, great heart, and that genius for hitting on the decisive word of the hour. Parson Lot, in 1848, did what Camille did in the Palais Royal on July 12th, 1789. He gave the watchword 'To Arms!' in British constitutional style which ultimately led to the fall of our own plutocratic Bastille—if our Bastille be yet fully down."*

Not only did Kingsley inspire the young men of his day, he also led the young women to recognise their duty and responsibility to their sisters as well as their fellows. Some of his addresses on the problems of health and education were specifically addressed to them, and they were stirred to action by his writings against the sweating system. Mrs. C. E. Maurice has recalled to me the wonderful impetus towards her ultimate life's work for better housing that he gave her sister, Octavia Hill—some delightful and helpful testimonies to this being provided in the letters of the latter.†

* "De Senectute," by Frederic Harrison, 1923.

† "Life of Octavia Hill," by C. E. Maurice.

The Outward Garb.

Kingsley dressed as any ordinary layman—farmer or gamekeeper—except on Sundays, and got to know the habits, occupations, and conditions of the people with whom he lived and laboured; but he hurriedly donned his coat when he thought the Bishop of London might catch him in his shirt sleeves,* and the late Dr. F. J. Furnivall told me how particular he became in his attire after the duties of a Court preacher carried him into Royal Society. Even Tom Hughes noticed how he was affected by the peculiarities of others with regard to dress and that "whenever Kingsley attended a meeting of the promoters of association in London, he was sure to find himself in the midst of bearded men, vegetarians, and other eccentric persons, and the contact was very grievous to him. 'As if we shall not be abused enough,' he used to say, 'for what we must say and do without being saddled with mischievous nonsense of this kind.' To less sensitive men the effect of eccentricity upon him was almost comic, as when on one occasion he was quite upset and silenced by the appearance of a bearded member of council at an important deputation, in a straw hat and blue plush gloves."† With all his deep feelings for humanity he had a keen regard for the conventional recognition of social distinctions—much as he often went straight across them himself. But when it came to the real heart of things the outward appearance never mattered. Kingsley abandoned an invitation to an important Art Exhibition in Manchester to sit through the night with a sick parishioner at Eversley. In such little matters he proved his greatness.

---

* "25 Years at St. Andrews," by A. H. K. Boyd.

† T. Hughes, in Prefatory Memoir to the Macmillan 1882 edition of "Alton Locke."

Aristocratic Ancestry.

If sometimes he showed a mediæval respect for the great, why distrust him? Did he not come from the race of forest huntsmen founded in the twelfth century by Rannulph de Kingsley of Vale Royal in Delamere Forest in Cheshire, and was not the Ralph Kingsley of the old Tarporley hunting song a kinsman? The bugle-horn in the coat of arms of Charles Kingsley was the one which the Kingsleys of the Middle Ages as Grand Foresters of Delamere had the right to wear. His ancestors had wandered south to the New Forest in the eighteenth century. There the grandfather of the novelist-parson followed the hounds, and his son would have lived the life of the sporting gentry—but the family fortunes fled and, at thirty years of age, Kingsley's father had to seek a means of livelihood. He was too old for the Army, so he went a second time to college and entered the Church with "every talent except that of using them."* His own family† became rovers like their forest ancestors. His son Charles would have gone to the prairies—but for the love of a woman. The second, Gerald, joined the Navy and died from fever in Torres Straits in September, 1844; the third was George Kingsley who died in 1892. When his wanderings ceased his daughter Mary became a great explorer in West Africa. The fourth boy, Henry, left for Australia in 1853, and returned to England in 1858.

Not only were all the brothers rovers, but the two

* F. Galton's "Hereditary Genius."

† Charles, born June 12th, 1819, at Holne; Gerald, baptised North Clifton, October 20th, 1821, died 1844; Louisa Mary, baptised North Clifton, October 27th, 1823; George H., born at Barnack, February 14th, 1827, died February 5th, 1892; Henry, born at Barnack, January 2nd, 1830, died May 24th, 1876.

sons of Charles Kingsley made their homes in other lands. One went to Mexico, and a nephew tells me that the elder, Maurice, settled in the United States. And when to this record we add the fact that the mother of the quartette of adventurous boys—Charles, Gerald, George, and Henry—had been born in the West Indies and that her father had been a judge in Barbados, we can understand Kingsley sympathising, with Carlyle and Tennyson, with General Eyre* of Jamaica, against the views of the leading democrats of his day. On any other plane his attitude seems strangely at variance with his outlook. Verily the Kingsleys were venturing spirits, and although Charles did not go across the seas to do daring deeds he found his fairyland at home—and there he met giants and elfs, troublesome men and wrongs waiting redress. He tackled them as bravely as his own Elizabethan heroes set about the foes of their country on the Spanish Main.

Still the race of Hero-spirits
  Pass the lamp from hand to hand;
Age from age the Words inherit—
  'Wife, and Child, and Fatherland.'
Still the youthful hunter gathers
  Fiery joy from wold and wood;
He will dare as dared his fathers.
  Give him cause as good.

From "The World's Age," written by Kingsley in 1849.

* Morley's "Gladstone."

His Perpetual Ferment.

How he loved the poor, and how he cared for the meanest things that moved! Even the beetles in Battersea fields were to him as to his own Alton Locke, "God's angels shining in coats of mail and fairy masquerading dresses. I envied them their beauty and their freedom." And he wanted men to live in as bright a bit of armour and to shine as brilliantly as the beetle. So he poured forth his indignation at the meanness and the deathliness of their habitations. His earnestness nearly overcame his stammer, as it struck as remorselessly and threateningly as an Alpine avalanche against the insanitary dwellings of the workers—the men who made our clothes, the women who reared our young, and the children who came as the angels of the home; such as it was for the many.

Kingsley was never still; his body, mind, and soul were always in a ferment. But he opened the way through the selfishness of Then into the broader co-operative spirit of Now. His health was shattered by his exertions for his fellows. He lived in a whirlpool of endeavour and striving. He made mistakes —for which we are thankful. Moderate, compromising, qualifying persons were shocked—and, again, let us rejoice. Inspiring those who understood him and stirring those who didn't, he flamed, flickered, and fell. But he had taught men that association is better than isolation; that co-operation is more than mere exchange, and that as they learn to co-operate with themselves and the Unseen towards which "the whole creation moves" they will enter the Land that is full of happy families living under their own houseroofs, where the laughter of children, the singing of Nature, and the

love of men and women shall be a Heaven here on Earth. And Kingsley told of the Hell that is ready for those who would stifle the music of humanity with the tinkling of coins and the crackling of bank notes. When he exalted the story of sacrifice he also twisted the dragon's tail.

" Gather you, gather you, angels of God—
Freedom, and Mercy, and Truth ;
Come ! for the Earth is grown coward and old,
Come down, and renew us her youth.
Wisdom, Self-sacrifice, Daring, and Love,
Haste to the battle-field, stoop from above,
To the Day of the Lord at hand.

Gather you, gather you, hounds of hell—
Famine, and Plague, and War ;
Idleness, Bigotry, Cant, and Misrule,
Gather, and fall in the snare !
Hireling and Mammonite, Bigot and Knave,
Crawl to the battle-field, sneak to your grave,
In the Day of the Lord at hand."

From " The Day of the Lord," written by Kingsley in 1849.

Typically English.

English men and English women love Kingsley as much for his faults as for his virtues. We love him for all he wanted to do as well as for what he did. We recall his searching outbursts—his exaggerations, his strenuous battling life, his buffetings in the Church he served with holy zeal; and how he told some guests, with that stammer that only left him when he preached, on his beloved rectory lawn at Eversley, that the pleasantest way of spending a day was "to live on your b—b—belly like a lizard in the sun, and to think about nothing."* Even such an introspection was an exaggeration—and yet as perfectly sincere as his attack on Newman and defence of Governor Eyre. For Kingsley was not a logician—though frightfully argumentative. He was too frankly human to succeed against a trained disputant.

He was always defending his friends. We get a glimpse of him in that mood when he wrote an article on Tennyson for *Fraser's Magazine*, September, 1850, because "penny-a-liners were talking vulgar and unkind personalities about the Poet Laureate," and he felt bound, as he wrote to Tennyson, "to tell all I could make listen what a gentleman and a Christian ought to think of you and your work." When he visited the poet in 1859 he "talked as usual on all sorts of topics, and walked hard up and down the study for hours smoking furiously, and affirming that tobacco was the only thing that kept his nerves quiet."† That was Tennyson's report of the visit. When greatly moved Kingsley was a solo talker in any company. Caroline Fox tells of Carlyle growing "drearier and

* A. C. Benson's "Reminiscences," *Cornhill Magazine*, August, 1912.
† "Life of Tennyson," by Hallam, Lord Tennyson.

drearier" in 1858, and recorded in her journal how "Kingsley pays him long visits, and comes away talking just like him."* Nine years later, when he visited the Rev. A. H. K. Boyd at St. Andrews, he was the life of the gathering—arguing, declaiming, and advising with the old vigour and filled with the nervous temperament that manifested itself to his host when one morning he read his letters, tore them into fragments, and cast them from the window on the trim little lawn. His friend almost counted the bits as he reflected that each separate fragment would have to be gathered to restore the conventional orderliness of the green. Similarly, when writing in his study at Eversley, he would stand before his high desk writing on half-sheets of notepaper that were thrown to the floor when filled—and had to be gathered and sorted out when the high-pressure writing was completed. His reading was done in the same strain of nervous excitement; fortunately, when he settled down to anything he worked right on with conviction to the end. His mind gripped to good purpose; and with his wildness and carelessness he possessed the power, "perhaps in greater perfection than any other man of that generation, of drawing the heart out of a book on a slight and apparently cursory reading."† While his Cambridge University lectures were not profound or unassailable, his personality gave them the quality of influencing the undergraduates in a deeper sense than any mere learning would have done. They were living, as distinct from dead, history. And Kingsley himself was essentially a live Englishman.

* "The Journal of Caroline Fox," Vol. 2, 1882.

† Thomas Hughes in his "Memoir of Bishop Fraser."

CHAPTER III.

EARLY CLERICAL WANDERINGS.

CLUSTERED in delightful imagery a legend of Devon surrounds the boyhood of Charles Kingsley. His father was curate-in-charge at Holne, near Ashburton, when the child was born in the vicarage of that little village under the brow of Dartmoor on June 12th, 1819. When only six weeks old he was taken on his first journey by road. In the "Letters and Memories" of Kingsley, Mrs. Kingsley wrote of the father leaving Holne for Clifton, and then holding the living of Barnack for six years. She, however, omitted important details of the clerical wanderings of those years. The full record now appears for the first time. Its accuracy has been established from the registers of the various parishes, and it is suggestive of the difficulties that the senior Kingsley had in settling down in the Church to which he was called at a comparatively late age in life. He was curate-in-charge at Holne in June, 1819, and was appointed to a curacy at Burton-on-Trent, where he held his first baptism on August 8th, 1819, officiating there until January 11th, 1821. He took 110 baptisms in all, and there is a record of his having received Easter offerings, so he must have been quasi-vicar at the time. His was a distinctive signature, much like the writing of his illustrious son. In 1821 he was at North Clifton, near Newark, taking up his duties as vicar on March 18th. There is an entry in the baptismal register on February

11th, but he did not then write vicar under his name as he did in all the entries on and subsequent to March 18th, 1821. They appear consecutively until February 24th, 1824. Then the Rev. T. T. Penrose signed the register as curate, until August 3rd, 1828, when there was one entry by Charles Kingsley as vicar. Probably he held the living until 1828 and Mr. Penrose acted as curate-in-charge (as he himself had done at Holne) during his absence from 1824 to 1828. On January 8th, 1824, he was appointed rector of Barnack (four miles from Stamford, Northamptonshire), and on March 29th took his first baptism there. He appears to have been fairly regularly in residence until July, 1827, when a curate took the baptisms, for rather more than a year, till September 8th, 1828. This gap is explained by the fact that he was the examining chaplain to the Bishop of Peterborough, and also held, as the church registers of North Clifton show, the living of that parish. After September, 1828, he was at Barnack continuously till the end of July, 1830. He had been given the living as a "warming pan" for the son of the bishop, who, unfortunately, did not turn out satisfactorily, as the *Gentleman's Magazine* of the period records.*

> "I watch them drift—the youthful aspirations,
> Shores, landmarks, beacons, drift alike.
> * * * * *
> Yet overhead the boundless arch of heaven
> Still fades to night, still blazes into day."
>
> *From "A Fragment" written in* 1867.

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* For these details I have to thank the Rev. M. H. Needham (vicar of Holne), the Rev. H. B. Freeman (vicar of Burton-on-Trent), the Rev. G. J. Rothwell (vicar of South Clifton, Newark), the Rev. Le Grange Leney (rector of Barnack), who have made searches of their parish records. The Rev. T. Bird, of Clifton, Nottingham (which is erroneously associated with the elder Kingsley), also helped in tracing the story in which, as the son-in-law of the Rev. Gerald Blunt, who succeeded Kingsley's father at Chelsea, he is naturally interested.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEGEND OF DEVON.

IN 1830, the Kingsley family returned to Devonshire, and in 1831 the father was appointed curate of Clovelly. In the following year the rector died, and Kingsley succeeded him. He left Clovelly early in 1836 to become rector of St. Luke's, Chelsea. Young Kingsley was sent to school at Clifton in 1831, and passed on to Helston in 1833, where he continued under the guidance of the Rev. Derwent Coleridge (father of the poet) until the removal to London. Indeed his actual acquaintance with Clovelly was mainly a holiday one ; and, truth to tell, the Charles Kingsley tradition has faded in the quaint little village. His son-in-law, the Rev. W. Harrison (a gentle and cultured man who married his daughter "Lucas Mallet") was rector from 1883 to 1897, but the older generation has passed on. Now it is the crowd of summer visitors, especially Americans, who take the liveliest interest in Kingsley. They are far better versed in his writings than the average Englishman and the present dwellers in Clovelly.*

Americans have named five towns after Kingsley ; in England the name appears in three counties, Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Hampshire, and Kingsley lived awhile in each—although the patronymic of the English villages was given long before Charles was born.

That Kingsley loved Devon it would be folly to doubt, and his wife recalled how he declared Clovelly to have been his inspiration until he met her. But

* Letter from the Rev. T. L. V. Simkin (rector of Clovelly) to the author.

Kingsley always wrote, as the author of "Rab and His Friends" observed, "everything at the highest pitch." We must temper his home-sickness for the West Country with his attachment to Eversley, where he lived for 33 of his 56 years. He did love Devon and the Elizabethan sea dogs, but he also saw the beauty of the eastern fens where "the arch of Heaven spreads more ample than elsewhere," and these he glorified in "Hereward the Wake," and wrote odes to the North-Easter and the Vikings. In 1843 he told the women of Helston that "if ever I married it should be a Cornish woman"; and in January, 1844, he was wedded to a lady of Oxfordshire, Fanny Eliza Grenfell, the daughter of Pascoe Grenfell, M.P. When he went to Yorkshire "the people are the finest I ever saw —tall, noble, laconic, often very handsome. Very musical, too, the women with the sweetest voices in speech which I have ever heard." When he was appointed Canon of Chester he was glad to preach to "shrewd, able northern men who can understand and respond," and on a visit to the Rev. A. H. K. Boyd at St. Andrews, Kingsley discovered a minister of the kirk concerning whom he, in a state of absence of mind, burst forth "Why, that man's a gentleman!"

What he liked he liked to a superlative degree; what he disliked was not only very horrid but, very likely, a creation of the Devil! He shed tears "at the sight of the most luscious and sunny prospects," and his mind was "unprejudiced by conventionality in language or in thought"—as he wrote to his lady when she was awakening him from a life of unsatisfied hungering (in which fishing, shooting, riding, and card-playing were the exciting motives) to one of studious purpose and high moral endeavour.

The truth is that with him, as with his own "Alton Locke," "the eye only sees that which it has the power of seeing," and he saw good in every work of God, whether animate or inanimate, and in every place where God moved along.

Kingsley's debt to the magic of Devonshire lore and scenery has been posthumously repaid. When he made Raleigh, Drake, Grenville, Oxenham, and the Rose of Torridge live again at Bideford and pictured the Bridge, "the soul, round which the town, as a body, has organised itself," the novelist's pen became the wand of prosperity to the almost forgotten town. Bideford had been slumbering into the seclusion that leads to impotence and privation. But "Westward Ho" became the tourists' slogan, and visitors floated in as did the folks of the sixteenth century when the mariners went to give thanks for their safe return. Since then Bideford has prospered, and his statue looks out upon the river he loved.

Not only did the publication of "Westward Ho" revive the fortunes of ancient Bideford, but the title of the book was appropriated by an estate development concern for a site upon which villas were being erected. It was a beautiful stretch along the shore, and Kingsley was not entirely appreciative of the implied compliment—although the circumstance of a new settlement being named after a novel is unique. He wrote "you will frighten away all the sea-pies and defile the Pebble Ridge with chicken bones and sandwich scraps"—an anticipation of the untidiness of the modern trippers who scatter the remnants of the feast without regard to the despoiling of nature's wayward beauty.

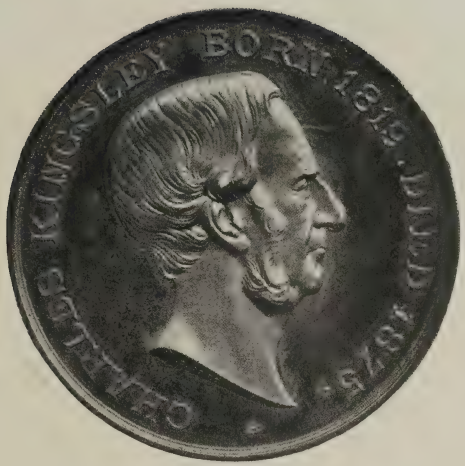
CHAPTER V.

SETTLED AT EVERSLEY.

A NEW world opened to the impressionable youth when he migrated to Chelsea in 1836, quitting the familiar ways of the West Country for the more artificial atmosphere of a typical London suburb where he began "to hate these dapper young—ladies—preachers like the devil, for I am sickened and enraged to see 'silly women blown about with every wind' falling in love with the preacher instead of his sermon and with his sermon instead of the Bible." And his father's clerical friends, "talking of nothing but parochial schools, and duties, and vestries, and curates, &c., &c.,"* annoyed him greatly.

Kingsley became a day-student at King's College, London, from which he went up to Magdalene College, Cambridge, in 1838, and entered into the roystering sporting life of the undergraduates of that day. Outdoor excitements fascinated him and might have ruined his University career; but he met Miss Fanny Eliza Grenfell, who changed the whole current of his life. She set him reading in a fresh direction, and Carlyle's "French Revolution" and Coleridge's "Aids to Reflection" became his text-books. Miss Grenfell's somewhat rigid adherence to orthodox religious ways kept Charles reading steadily. It was a severe effort at first, but love conquered, and he "crammed" so

* Letter from Kingsley to his Helston school fellow, R. C. Powles.



THE MEMORIAL MEDAL OF THE CHESTER SOCIETY OF NATURAL SCIENCE, LITERATURE, AND ART.

THE STUDY DOOR AT EVERSLEY RECTORY.

Eversley Church, with the Path to the Rectory Lawn.

thoroughly that he attained academic distinction. And that despite the joke he played on his examination paper.

Asked to " describe a common pump," he drew a picture of the pump on the village green opposite an ancient church. The people were depicted bringing vessels of every size and shape while the village beadle stood near watching the effect of the notice that read " this pump locked during Divine service." It indicated a smile at the clerical officiousness of those days.

He had entered his name as a law student at Lincoln's Inn, but decided to go into the church, and in July, 1842, became curate of Eversley, a wild Hampshire village, from which the previous rector had absconded, and where tares were growing tall among the wheat. The parish was typical of the paralysis of the countryside that had followed the Industrial Revolution. When he arrived the alehouses were full and the church was empty on the Sundays. It was an illustration of Cause and Effect.

The young curate set to work in the spirit he emphasised in " the Saint's Tragedy " that " toil is the true knight's pastime." He got below the social veneer that separated the people round about and sought to bring them together in a common faith out of which might arise united effort. The advent of a " bold thinker " quickly transformed the place. Men soon began to see that the new curate was concerned with their bodily comforts as well as their spiritual happiness. Christianity, as Kingsley taught, was no airship to carry men fleeing, in their terror, from the wrath to come. It was a practical mission seeking to realise the Lord's Prayer on earth. He started penny readings (a new form of entertainment in those days), he held

a night school, gave cottage lectures to those at a distance from the church, managed a coal club, and generally associated higher things with the wants and necessities of his people. Gaining knowledge was not always the allurement which led the labourers to Kingsley's night school, for there was a man living in the parish not long ago who, when asked what he had learned there, replied: "Well I don't know as how I learned much." "Yes, but what did Kingsley teach?" And the old fellow of eighty answered with the modest reticence of the country lad, "Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't pay much notice, for I was courtin' the missus." How Kingsley would have rejoiced had he known this, for he regarded marriage as a solace for all ills, and in his own case it certainly was an idyllic life.

"Oh that we two were Maying
Down the stream of the soft spring breeze;
Like children with violets playing
In the shade of the whispering trees!

Oh that we two sat dreaming
On the sward of some sheep-trimmed down,
Watching the white mist steaming
Over river and mead and town!

Oh that we two lay sleeping
In our nest in the churchyard sod,
With our limbs at rest on the quiet earth's breast,
And our souls at home with God!"

Elizabeth's Song in "The Saint's Tragedy."

CHAPTER VI.

EVERSLEY RECTORY.

KINGSLEY gave a new standard to the work of the parish priest, studying music and medicine to make his equipment the more complete for varying the monotony of village life and attending on those of his people who were sick. They were a curious race—descendants of the smugglers and highwaymen who infested the hamlets off the main Portsmouth to London road in the years that followed Waterloo, and saw the development of the stage coach. Many were poachers in a county devoted to game. As I walked in the autumn from Winchfield to Eversley—along the six-and-a-half miles of highway that Kingsley so often tramped—I saw the heather purpling and the bracken yellowing to its fall, while the partridge and the rabbit scurried across the great heath. After passing Hartley Row and turning on to that famous stretch of Hartford Bridge Flats one felt that there indeed was the paradise of the poacher in the days of Parson Lot, and one could feel the poignancy of the lament of the poacher's widow. The solitary cottage at the cross roads is probably where Kingsley rested almost exhausted, on the day following the scene in the London church* in 1851.

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* See page 46.

I am long past wailing and whining—
  I have wept too much in my life :
I've had twenty years of pining
  As an English labourer's wife.

A labourer in Christian England,
  Where they cant of a Saviour's name,
And yet waste men's lives like the vermin's
  For a few more brace of game.
* * * * *
You have sold the labouring man, squire,
  Body and soul to shame,
To pay for your seat in the House, squire,
  And to pay for the feed of your game.
* * * * *
We quarrelled like brutes, and who wonders ?
  What self respect could we keep,
Worse housed than your hacks and your pointers,
  Worse fed than your hogs and your sheep ?
* * * * * *
When your youngest, the mealy-mouthed rector,
  Lets your soul rot asleep to the grave,
You will find in your God the protector
  Of the freeman you fancied your slave.*

And then striding over the main artery across the moorland, with the ruts like rivulets after the rain, one saw great boards setting forth that some of the frontages of the land were to be let for " superior residences."

How Kingsley would have stammered out the word " s—s—superior indeed ! " as if the cottagers and the labourers were a different race from the wealthy. Still, even there, words must be carefully chosen, for in the village of Eversley I heard old folks tell how he had taken sides with the squire for the enclosure of a part of the Common. Those memories linger long, and age has scarcely mellowed their intensity.

In the last quarter of a mile the road dips down into a hollow—and there is a little triangular piece of common land separating the Church of St. Mary and

* " The Bad Squire," from *Yeast*.

the rectory that was Kingsley's from the main road. There is now a new burial ground opposite the old lych gate ; otherwise the scene is as Kingsley saw it. In front of the rectory runs what is practically a private road to the great house of Bramshill ; a gate from the churchyard opens on to the rectory lawn. Passing the grave of Kingsley " and Fanny his wife," with that of Mrs. Froude her sister by its side, I stood in the shadow of the acacia and the great Scotch firs overlooking the trees and shrubs that Kingsley and his wife, like Darby and Joan, planted when their boys and girls had grown up.

In the wonderful rectory—much older than the church—the present Rector, the Rev. E. F. Morison, D.D., preserves the tradition with the care of a disciple. The study is much as it was in Kingsley's day, and from the mantelpiece is handed the tobacco jar from which Parson Lot drew great supplies. The scene seems very real, for in the oak beams are the two hooks for the hammock that was slung for Kingsley because of the dampness of the brick floor. And the fishing rods, hunting whips, and pipes, which were as useful to the rector as were his books, can be imagined.

We pull down the folding shutters over the doorway (similar to the tradesmen's window blinds one knew in youth) and recall how Kingsley had them installed during the months that followed the Chartist discomfiture. Gangs of housebreakers roved over the countryside. Mr. Hollest, the clergyman of Frimley, a few miles away, was murdered in his house, and in the *Christian Socialist* Parson Lot wrote on the social significance of the tragedy, declaring that " the whole enlightened and civilised British public " were accomplices before the act.

But Charles Kingsley did not intend his own household should run risks. He had a gun loaded with slugs, and two pistols in his room. His pupil was similarly well provided. One night they heard the movements of men outside, and at half-past two in the morning they rushed out and fired at a man. Truly Kingsley was valiant by night as well as by day. The tension was maintained for several months, and kept Parson Lot from seeing as much of his co-operative friends in London as he would have done but for the robbers and his gun. On one occasion when Mrs. Kingsley was returning from the station he and the pupil met her on horseback and escorted her home with pistols.*

All this, and more, was recalled in the study. The house seems to ramble along with mediæval passages leading to the apple store, the beer cellar—with the same staging on which Parson Lot raised his barrels of ale from the floor—and the ancient bacon-smoking chimney that he used. For he was farmer as well as rector. Beyond the garden are the fields in which he spent happy days with the hay, "pitching and unloading every wagonful." Then we wander to Church Farm and gaze upon one of the many ponds that surrounded the rectory, making it so very damp and insanitary. Some have been filled in, and there is one spot which, Dr. Morison tells me, is always green.

The three-stalled stable is still as of yore, but Kingsley found it impossible to keep it fully inhabited, so he turned a part into a night school as distinct from the classes held in the rectory itself. What pathos is there in the letter of the rector's wife to John Martineau in 1856; "the dear old horse fell and we cannot afford

* See "John Martineau's Letters" (Kingsley's first pupil).

to buy another." Yes, Kingsley's life was a great struggle, preaching, teaching, writing, leading, and guiding from the very depths of his soul—and never free from the harassing cares of a generous clergyman living in a house far too big and always requiring repairs. He wore himself out working for his family and his fellows. At thirty-eight " my first grey hairs are coming, and I am on the wrong side of six-and-thirty," was a reflection couched with a tinge of personal pain so unlike the young Parson Lot, who defied the materialistic world at thirty.*

What a silence is always in that quiet corner of an England that is becoming noisy and less tranquil! We wander from the garden into the rectory again. The semi-circular rounded recess of the drawing-room suggests the monastic uses of the mediæval original building. The oaken floor proves the antiquity of that portion of the house. A cupboard with trays for geological specimens brings thoughts of Kingsley's work for natural science. There are cupboards everywhere; Mrs. Kingsley had a mania for filling odd corners with shelves and cupboards. Up the wide staircase we slowly ascend, for there are four others opening out from the central stem; the two upper stairways branch out like the topmost arms from the trunk of a tree. Even the bathroom tells its story of domesticity. Kingsley had a heart of uncertain action, and in the topmost portion of the door is a sliding panel placed there lest he should require help—just a touch of that homeliness that ran through his

* R. B. Litchfield, in a pamphlet published by the Working Men's College in 1902 on the Beginnings of that venture, told how he had put a portrait of Kingsley in his room at Trinity College, Cambridge, and that a friend, on seeing the picture, exclaimed " Good Lord ! here's that —— Chartist "—indicative of the feeling with which Parson Lot was regarded by people of his own social standing.

life as when, after the reception at the British Association meeting at Dundee he saw a frail young woman waiting to be driven home, and coughing a little. Kingsley suddenly approached her and, in paternal tones, said "My dear, always wear flannel next your skin."* But he who was so solicitous of the health of others sadly neglected his own.

And in that great bedroom with its windows looking out towards the low hills and the garden Eversley's most famous rector fought his last conflict. There is the door through which, when pneumonia was seeking its victim, he rushed into the next room and the next —for all the bedrooms are communicating—and bade farewell to his wife.

He had finished his last effort on earth.

Descending into the hall and looking out beyond the hedgerow I fancy what joyous scenes there must have been on such occasions as when he returned from the Royal wedding in 1863. He had been tutor to the Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward VII), and was invited to the breakfast at Windsor Castle, from which he returned home "with a three-cornered court dress hat full of wedding cake, and bonbons stolen for the children, feeling, he said, as if a scene in the 'Arabian Nights' had turned into reality and brought crowned princesses and fairies and fairyland upon earth." For although Kingsley was a sad and earnest man he had the simplicity of a child, and was often moved to tears by the sight of some awesome phenomena of nature or hearing his own plaintive songs sung.

But he revelled in the love of children, and many a romp with his two boys and two girls did he take over that rectory lawn. Yes, under that tree now bending

* "Twenty-five Years at St. Andrews," by A. H. K. Boyd.

o'er with the weight of centuries, Parson Lot played "hide and seek" and dodged the shadows of the twilight until they broadened into gloom—just as on that autumn Sabbath evening when I last visited Eversley and, the Harvest Festival finished, I went forth into the darkened silence of the night tramping along the road he took when he travelled to London and exposed the garments with which the sweating tailors were veiling humanity. And one thought, too, of how joyously he strode along the highway when he went to meet Tom Hughes for a holiday in Wales :—

"Come away with me, Tom,
Term and talk are done ;
My poor lads are reaping,
Busy every one.
Curates mind the parish,
Sweepers mind the court ;
We'll away to Snowdon
For our ten days' sport.

* * * *

Show me life and progress,
Beauty, health, and man ;
Houses fair, trim gardens,
Turn wher'er I can.

* * * *

Tho' we earn our bread, Tom,
By the dirty pen,
What we can we will be
Honest Englishmen.
Do the work that's nearest,
Though it's dull at whiles,
Helping, when we meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles ;
See in every hedgerow
Marks of angels' feet,
Epics in each pebble
Underneath our feet ;
Once a year, like schoolboys,
Robin-Hooding go,
Leaving fops and fogies
A thousand feet below."

From "The Invitation" to Tom Hughes, 1856.

CHAPTER VII.

KINGSLEY IN HIS PULPIT.

KINGSLEY'S village sermons were just homely talks that appealed to quiet country folk whose only school had been the harvest field and the hedgerow—for the education that is Elementary was not made compulsory till 1870. Always he exalted the kingship of Christ, and called upon his people to become holy subjects. There was a message of hope for the weary and of confidence in the future. He told the people of Eversley in 1849 :

" I believe that the end of this world, in the real scripture sense of the word ' world,' is coming very quickly and very truly. The end of this system of society, of these present ways in religion, and money making, and conducting ourselves in all the affairs of life, which we English people have got into nowadays. The end of it is coming. It cannot last much longer ; for it is destroying itself. It will not last much longer ; for Christ, and not the Devil, is the King of the earth."

He went right home to their pleasures as well as their trials. In a sermon on preparing for Christmas the preacher told his congregation of farmers and country gentry and tradesmen that " Christmas is the time for settling accounts and paying debts," and upheld the man who " kept himself from throwing away his money in drink, and kept his daughters from throwing away money on dress, which is just what too many, in their foolish, godless, indecent hurry to get rid of their own children off their hands, do not do."* Kingsley won the confidence of the humble folk who saw a new

* " Sermons on National Subjects," 1852.

gleam from the pulpit of the parish church they had rarely entered, till he came and talked with the folk. He made their sorrows his own troubles, helped to pitch their hay, and planted his own shrubs and the avenue of yews under whose shade he was laid to rest when there was "no more fighting."

"Why am I put in this parish," he questioningly pleaded on the first Sunday in Lent in 1850, "except to teach you? And how can I teach you better, than by answering your questions?" As he visualised the stories of the Hebrew prophets and described the songs of victory, the raging of the hosts, the "sending a blast," the thoughts and actions of the evil-doers and the leaders of old, the worshippers felt the newness and the trueness of the ancient Scriptural history. He brought Isaiah, Amos, and Moses to warn the modern interpreters of the Assyrians and the Pharaohs.

"My friends," preached Kingsley, "if they really read their Bibles for themselves, and took God at His word, there would be less tyrannising of one man over another, less grinding down of men by masters, and of men by each other—for the poor are very hard on each other in England, now, my friends—very envious, and spiteful, and slanderous about each other. They say that dog won't eat dog—yet one poor man grudges, and supplants another, and tries to get into his place and beat him down in his wages. And there are those who call themselves learned men, who tell the poor that that is God's will, and the way by which God intends them to prosper. If those men believed their Bibles they would be repenting in sackcloth and ashes for having preached such a devil's sermon to God's children. If men really read their Bibles, there would be less eating and drinking with the drunken; less idleness and luxury among the rich; less fancying that a man has a right to do what he likes with his own, because all men would know that they were only the Lord's stewards, bound to give an account to Him of the good which they had done with what He has lent them. There would be fewer parents fancying that they can tyrannise over their children, bringing them up as heathens for the sake of the few pence they earn; using bad language, and doing shameful things before them, which they dared not do if they recollected that the Lord was looking on."

There has been a mellowing of such a harsh state of society since that sermon was preached. Working

men have learned much in combination; educated men do not hide themselves behind such phrases as "force of circumstances"; drunkenness has diminished; wealth, in some degree, realises its responsibilities; a social consciousness is supplanting the old doctrine of indifference; boys no longer climb chimneys nor endure the physical and mental exhaustion of the half-time system in factories, and how Kingsley would have rejoiced! Even then in the same sermon he exclaimed "Oh, my blessed Lord! if people did but know how near Thou wert to them, all that would vanish out of England as the night clouds vanish away before the sun." It was characteristic of this nineteenth-century Prophet that from all his burning, blasting denunciations there arose a transforming light in which his hearers saw a world sweetened and quietened. His advice to a friend entering the ministry was to know something of the wages and conditions of the people with whom he laboured. Kingsley did that in his own parish, and beyond in the great city of London.

His sermons were always carefully and reverently prepared. Exhausted on the Sunday evening he would talk over with his wife the subject for the following Sabbath; on the Tuesday he would finish his plan and allow his thoughts to steep into his mind for completion on the Friday. Then he was clear for the many calls of the Saturday.

These discourses were adapted, in their form and language, to the learning of each congregation. But the spirit, the soul, of them was ever the same. He preached in London on behalf of Westminster Hospital, and the vocabulary was of a different order to the easy words and quick understanding of the Eversley

sermons. But the opportunity to cleanse the foulness of things for which his congregation was collectively responsible was taken as fiercely as the personal and individual call for decency and right living was given in the quiet village.

" It is on account of its contiguity to these neglected, destitute, and poisonous localities, that this hospital seems to me especially valuable," he said.

And then came a vivid analysis of the selfishness of the rich man who

" will be tempted to pay an exorbitant price for anything that can increase his personal convenience, and yet when the question is about improving the supply of necessaries to the poor, stand haggling about considerations of profitable investment,"

and of the thoughtlessness of ladies with their

" women-servants suffering from diseases produced by overwork in household labour, especially by carrying heavy weights up the steep stairs of our London houses."*

Thus he brought society to see itself in the mirror of his revival of the teachings of Christ.

Kingsley's challenge to the agricultural interests had a volcanic effect. Not only did it overwhelm the farmers and landlords of his day, but its streams have frequently oozed forth since then whenever any local tyranny or sectional grievance has become unbearable. " Yeast " was the herald of the Agricultural Labourers' Union which, from 1872 to 1877, claimed to have put six million pounds into the pockets of the farm labourers in the form of increased wages. But as the first number of Michael Davitt's *Labour World* of 1890 said, in dealing with the agricultural labourers of England, " Kingsleys and Girdlestones are few and far between ; in fact, the production of two such men in a century threatens ecclesiastical disruption." Such a tribute may be rhetorical, but coming from a

* Sermon on " The Fount of Science " at St. Margaret's, Westminster, May 4th, 1851.

Catholic, it is an acknowledgment that needs no argument. And it may fittingly be mentioned as one of the influences that radiated from Kingsley's pulpit.

In 1851 he preached on "The Message of the Church to Labouring Men" at St. John's, Fitzroy Square, London, W. Taking his text from Luke iv, 16–21, Kingsley proclaimed the "acceptable year of the Lord" to be

> "One of the wisest of Moses's institutions, by which, at the expiration of a certain period, all debtors and bond-servants were released, and all land which had been sold returned to its original possessor: so that in Judæa there could be no absolute or eternal alienation of the soil. If I wanted one proof above all others of the inspired wisdom of Moses, I should choose this unparalleled contrivance for preventing the accumulation of large estates, and the reduction of the people into the state of serfs and day-labourers. . . . If those words of the Lord of all the earth mean anything, my friends, they mean this: that all systems of society which favour the accumulation of capital in a few hands—which oust the masses from the soil which their forefathers possessed of old—which reduce them to the level of serfs and day-labourers, living on wages and on alms—which crush them down with debt, or in anywise degrade or enslave them, or deny them a permanent stake in the commonwealth, are contrary to the kingdom of God."

At the conclusion of the sermon the incumbent, the Rev. G. S. Drew, rose and declared much of the teaching to be dangerous and untrue.* Kingsley only bowed his head, pronounced the benediction, and came down from the pulpit. He went home the next day to Eversley, weary and exhausted with the controversies and agitations in which he had centred from April, 1848, to that culminating Sunday in June, 1851. He turned to poetry as his solace, and within twenty-four hours unburdened his soul in "The Three Fishers," with its haunting personal refrain :—

> "And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
> Though the harbour bar be moaning."

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* Times have changed. The present vicar, Rev. T. Basil Woodd, of St. John's, is "poles removed from Socialism," but he wrote me recently: "I would be prepared to preach all that Kingsley then said—and no one would consider my sermon in any way extraordinary."

CHAPTER VIII.

COLLAPSE OF CHARTISM.

OWENISM had glimpsed awhile in the early nineteenth century ; it went out with the discords of Harmony Hall—as the Queenwood colony was inaptly named. But from observant and insighted believers in common action came the co-operative movement advocated by Dr. King of Brighton* and described by the poet Southey as " a slip of Owenism grafted upon a common-sense stock."

Workmen had been disillusioned by the results that followed the Reform Act of 1832.† The politically-minded had thought it would lead to the government of the country falling into the hands of the people ; but it simply transferred the power from the aristocracy to the rising manufacturers. Those who clung to the co-operative idea embodied in many trading societies had, as G. J. Holyoake wrote of the Owenite Congress in London in 1832, " grander views than dwelling on the perversities of Acts of Parliament. Co-operators were invited to set out, like pilgrims, to the land Beulah where communities flourished and Acts of Parliament were unknown, or unnecessary."‡ But those communities and societies were at the mercy of adventurers. They had no legal standing ; they could not recover anything from those who defrauded them. For Parliament had not recognised these new combinations for mutual aid in the industrial world.

* " Dr. William King and the 'Co-operator,' 1828-1830," by T. W. Mercer.
† See " The Rise of Democracy," by J. Holland Rose.
‡ " History of Co-operation."

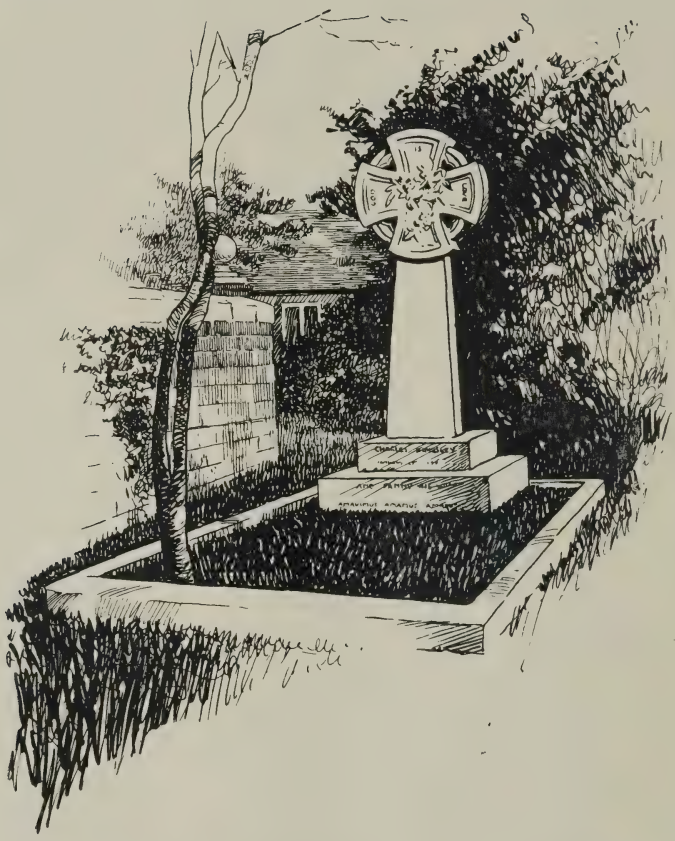
Out of the despondency of the times Chartism had been born ; it was not yet killed by the egotism and self-assertiveness of its leaders. Following the upheavals in France and elsewhere on the Continent, the Chartists decided to demonstrate their demand for the People's Charter on April 10th, 1848. There had been a convention a week before in the John Street Institute, W., lent to the Chartists by the followers of Robert Owen. Lloyd Jones and William Lovett, who had been to Paris, gave the delegates an account of the national workshops that had been set up. On the Sunday preceding the fateful Monday G. J. Holyoake and C. D. Collet arranged with some forty reformers that they should distribute themselves among the crowds to watch the manners and methods of the authorities. Crowds of Chartists and special constables assembled on Kennington Common. Most accurate contemporaries varied in their estimates of the numbers, and the alleged 5,700,000 signatures on the Petition taken to Westminster in three cabs were counted down to 1,975,496. Thousands of the names were fictitious. Viewed from the modern angle the People's Charter appears a mild manifesto. Most of its points have been dimmed by the apathy of the descendants of the Chartists. At a meeting in the evening of April 10th the People's Charter Union was formed. O'Connor was laughed out of his leadership ; Lloyd Jones settled down as a master tailor in Oxford Street (one of his first orders being for a silk velvet vest for Holyoake), and the most effective result of the demonstration was the unnoticed introduction of two men who went from Lincoln's Inn to Waterloo Bridge, and then on to the Rev. F. D. Maurice at 21, Queen's Square, Bloomsbury.

THE SCHOOLS AT EVERSLEY.

The left wing was erected as a memorial to Kingsley, but the classrooms and living-rooms were put up by the famous rector. For a time he ran the school himself, and taught there. He then had a young man of the village (Frederic Marshall) educated at Winchester for the post of schoolmaster, and instituted a voluntary rate of 3d. for the maintenance of the school.

The present rector, the Rev. Dr. Morison (to whose kindness in affording opportunity for personal acquaintance with the rectory and other remaining associations with Kingsley tribute is gratefully given by the writer), has recently discovered Charles Kingsley's school books. The first meeting was held on March 9th, 1854, and a set of twenty rules drawn up, two of which are typical of the rector's regard for health. One read "The children must come to the school clean with their hands and faces washed and hair combed." The other was, "No child may attend school as long as it has a sore head, measles, or any infectious or contagious disorder."

The schoolmaster's salary was fixed at £35 per year, with lodging and coals; and three years later his wife was appointed to superintend the school needlework for a salary of £15 per annum. Originally the children of the villagers paid one halfpenny per week for tuition, but on January 9th, 1863, this was raised to one penny by the committee, Kingsley being in the chair.



THE GRAVE OF CHARLES KINGSLEY "AND FANNY HIS WIFE" IN EVERSLEY CHURCHYARD—WITH THE RECTORY KEEPING WATCH THROUGH THE TREES.

"Under a spray of his favourite passion-flower are the words of his choice, the story of his life:

'Amavimus, Amamus, Amabimus.'*

And above them, circling round the cross, 'God is Love,' the keynote of his faith."

* "We have loved, we love, we shall love."

Kingsley had met Maurice in 1844, and a strong devotion had sprung up between them. So when the rector of Eversley heard of the impending storm in London he determined to find out what it all meant. On the morning of April 10th, 1848, he rushed up to town with his friend John W. Parker the publisher, intending to stay the night at Chelsea rectory. He went straight to Maurice, who was in bed with a cold. Kingsley was given a letter of introduction to J. M. Ludlow in his chambers at 3, Lincoln's Inn. Thither strode the country rector; and there the apostle of "Nervous* Christianity" conferred with the equally enthusiastic barrister. They chummed immediately. Kingsley remarked to Ludlow, "the poor fellows mean well, however misguided; it would be horrible if there were bloodshed. I am going to Kennington Common to see what man can do. Will you come with me?" And they went off together. On Waterloo Bridge they met some of the dejected, disillusioned followers of the Chartist leaders, and then turned to talk the matter over with Maurice. They were greatly excited, and Kingsley was up till 4 a.m.† writing a placard for the hoardings, "to help these poor wretches to the truest alms—to words—texts from the Psalms, anything which may keep one man from cutting his brother's throat." The friends determined to have meetings for prayer and study, to start a new set of real "Tracts for the Times," to set about collecting money to pay for the cost of placarding London with their message, as written by "a working parson," *i.e.*, the Rev. Charles Kingsley, Junr.—as he was generally described at this period.

* This adjective, used by Mr. G. K. Chesterton in his "Victorian Literature," more aptly fits Kingsley than the hackneyed "muscular Christianity."

† "Memories and Letters of C. Kingsley," which also contain the full text of the placard.

CHAPTER IX.

PARSON LOT.

THE times were too much out of joint to allow of delay on the part of these valiant doctors of society. On May 6th, *Politics for the People* appeared, with Ludlow as editor and Kingsley the best known of the nineteen contributors. It was a weekly journal of 16 octavo pages, and ran to seventeen numbers, including two supplements. It rose to a circulation of 2,000 copies. Most of the writers adopted a *nom de plume*; the editor wrote as J. T., Kingsley as "Parson Lot," the sobriquet brought on himself at a meeting of the promoters, when, finding himself in a minority of one, he jokingly said he felt much as Lot must have felt in the Cities of the Plain when "he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law."* According to Hughes, the name Parson Lot was then and there suggested and adopted by Kingsley, becoming familiar to the public in *Politics for the People*, the *Christian Socialist*, the *Journal of Association*, "Alton Locke," "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," and other tracts and pamphlets.

The object of *Politics for the People* as indicated in the prospectus was

"to consider the questions which are most occupying our countrymen at the present moment, such as the Extension of Suffrage; the relation of the Capitalist to the Labourer; What a Government can, or cannot do, to find work or pay for the Poor. By *considering* these questions, we mean that it is not our purpose to put forth ready-made theories upon them."

And then the reader was told that

"politics have been separated from household ties and affections—from art, and science, and literature. . . . when they become

* Genesis xix., 14.

POLITICS FOR THE PEOPLE they are found to take in a very large field ; whatever concerns man as a social being must be included in them. . . . Politics have been separated from Christianity ; religious men have supposed that their only business was with the world to come. But politics for the people cannot be separated from religion."

That was the viewpoint of the men who for four months gave money, time and thought to proclaim the law of Duty as opposed to self-interest.

In the first of his letters to the Chartists, Kingsley did not deny that

" it is much cheaper and pleasanter to be reformed by the devil than by God ; for God will only reform society on condition of our reforming every man his own self—while the devil is quite ready to help us to mend the laws and the parliament, earth and heaven, without ever starting such an impertinent and ' personal ' request as that a man should mend himself."

Therein is the keynote of the Kingsley philosophy of life—religious and economic. It was a recognition of manhood and the need for an aggregation of individual goodness and greatness to make up a collective nation. Browning asked to "elevate the race at once." Kingsley and his friends pleaded for men to strive through the present hardships to loftier heights by the pursuit of their duties to themselves, to their families, to their nation, to humanity, to God. It was the English version of the Gospel of Mazzini. The idea was developed in the second letter to the Chartists wherein Parson Lot acknowledged the fault of the parsons in not telling the people that

" the true Reformer's Guide, the true poor man's book, the true ' God's Voice against Tyrants, Idlers, and Humbugs,' is the Bible. . . . We have used the Bible as if it was a mere special constable's handbook—an opium-dose for keeping beasts of burden patient while they were being overloaded—a mere book to keep the poor in order. . . . instead of being a book to keep the poor in order, it is a book, from beginning to end, written *to keep the rich in order*."

Parson Lot was at work in white heat, singeing the smug respectability of the Victorians with his " burning

language."* His articles on art galleries, museums, and the like stirred a wider public than the 2,000 readers of *Politics for the People* ; but they worried his aristocratic friends and thwarted his prospects of clerical preferment. Mrs. Kingsley (two of whose sisters had married lords) seems to have had some such fear and to have gently written it to him, for in a letter to her in that troublous year he wrote so fiercely that she was probably silenced into approval of his course :—

"I will not be a liar. I will speak in season and out of season. I will not shun to declare the whole counsel of God. I will not take counsel with flesh and blood, and flatter myself into the dream that while every man on earth, from Maurice back to Abel, who ever tried to testify against the world, has been laughed at, misunderstood, slandered, and that, bitterest of all, by the very people he loved best, and understood best, I alone am to escape. My path is clear, and I will follow in it."†

And he did. Kingsley was lecturing regularly at Queen's College for Women, which Maurice had started in Harley Street, and they hoped for his appointment to a professorship at King's College to meet expenses, for he could not afford to come so frequently to town. It was a real sacrifice for him to throw himself so vigorously into the new movement. His very vigour, however, led to his mischance. He was rejected at King's College ; and, while not neglecting his parish work, made real acquaintance with working men, and commenced writing novels—to ease his soul's disturbance at the sights he had seen and to meet the heavy expenses of a great rambling rectory in a wide straggling parish with calls deeper than his resources. In June he wrote to Thomas Cooper the Chartist, the author of "The Purgatory of Suicides," that

"I want someone like yourself, intimately acquainted with the mind of the working classes, to give me such an insight into their life and thoughts as may enable me to consecrate my powers

* The *Times* obituary article, January 25th, 1875.
† Letter quoted in "Letters and Memories."

effectually to their service. For them I have lived for several years. I come to you to ask you if you can tell me how to live more completely for them. . . . If you will allow me to call on you, you will very much oblige me."

Kingsley saw much of Thomas Cooper, and through him the workingman's mind as revealed later in the chapter dealing with Alton Locke.

Politics for the People created something of a sensation. The list of contributors would have made the fortune of any journal commercially controlled. But this journal had a mission—and money-making was not the object. And so, in No. 11, on July 1st, 1848, an announcement was made that the paper would shortly cease. John W. Parker, the publisher, had taken the risk of bringing out the weekly sheet; but the editors recognised that the circulation did not cover the outlay, and so resolved to discontinue the work. They were not apologetic; on the contrary, "we are glad to say we have offended some men of all parties; we intended to do it; if we speak again, we shall do it again. We believe that honest, firm, free discussion is the proper safety-valve for excitement; that cordial sympathy with sufferers is worth all the patronising help in the world."

When the final issue appeared a title page was included, on the back of which was a sonnet:—

"Not all who seem to fail, have failed indeed;
Not all who fail have therefore worked in vain;
For all our acts to many issues lead;
And out of earnest purpose, pure and plain.
Enforced by honest toil o' hand or brain,
The Lord will fashion, in his own good time,
(Be this the labourer's proudly humble creed).
Such ends as, to his wisdom, fitliest chime
With his vast Love's eternal harmonies.
There is no failure for the good and wise;
What tho' thy seed should fall by the wayside
And the birds snatch it—yet the birds are fed
Or they may bear it far across the tide
To give rich harvests after thou art dead."

This was attributed to Charles Kingsley by his brother Henry in his novel " Stretton " in 1869 ; subsequently it was said to have been written by Professor Conington, and later the anonymous lines were ascribed to Dean Trench. As recently as 1922 Sir Edward Clarke (who first heard the lines when a student at the Working Men's College) conclusively proved that they had been written by M. I. Brickdale, a fellow pupil with Ludlow in the Chambers of Bellenden Ker.*

The strain of those months was telling on Parson Lot, and the writing of " Yeast " took a great deal out of him. This novel was written, as his wife said, with his heart's blood. The ferment of the time gave warmth to the work, but exhausted its author. Unceasingly he visited his parishioners, made frequent trips to London to consult with his friends, and was struggling all the time with the problem of domestic economy. Writing became a means of paying accounts as well as spreading his views—and he wrote far beyond midnight. The first part of " Yeast " appeared in the July when *Politics for the People* ceased. Kingsley struggled on, with ill-health hovering about him, till the autumn, when he completely broke down at the end of his Sunday service—and was ordered rest at Bournemouth. But his strength lessened, and the winter of 1848 and spring of 1849 were spent at Ilfracombe, where he began to dream of "Alton Locke."

In May he was at Clovelly, and in June returned to Eversley, spending a few days in London on the way. He was gratified with his greetings " from old co-operative friends," but found the town " perfectly *horrible* " as he went " tailor-hunting " with Dr. Guy. In less than two months his health gave way again, and he

* See *Cornhill Magazine*, December, 1922.

returned to Clovelly in August, getting lodgings at the top of "the narrow paved cranny of a street," hiring a pony for the afternoon for eighteenpence, dining at a farmhouse for one shilling and ninepence, giving a tea party to his landlady, sharing the cake Mrs. Kingsley had sent him and writing jolly little letters to the children at home. And then he wrote to Ludlow, a confirmed bachelor, about the loneliness of a married man away from his beloved ones: "People talk of love ending at the altar. . . Fools!"

By September he was writing to his father from Eversley, "being panic-struck at the increased ill-health of the parish, I hurried home, where I am." Cholera was raging through England, and Parson Lot rushed backwards and forwards between London and home; he studied Blue Books on the Water Supply; he went into Bermondsey, and called on the local Improvement Commission to rescue the working people from "the tyranny of the small shopkeeping landlords, who get their rents out of the flesh and blood of these men"; he pleaded with the Bishop of Oxford to stir the church, and wrote to everyone he knew to help to destroy the nests of typhus, consumption, and cholera, and rebuild them fit for folks to live in. "Remember," he wrote, "it is not a question of alms. It is only to get some man to take the trouble of making a profitable investment, and getting six per cent for his money."

It was in that state of ferment that "Yeast" was revised from the pages of "Fraser" and published in volume form; that "Alton Locke" was growing, and that Parson Lot was living all the time.

CHAPTER X.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.

MEANWHILE, those who had been associated with *Politics for the People* met weekly at Maurice's house to discuss the problems of the time, and made a beginning in their educational endeavours by setting up a night school in Little Ormond Yard. Others joined, including F. J. Furnivall, whose really outrageous indiscretions might have discouraged a less selfless band of disciples than those who gathered around that spiritual saint—as Gladstone described Maurice. But the Christian Socialists were not mere denunciators. Carlyle had been thundering his eternal "Nay" and laying bare the two-legged humanity of the earth. Maurice and his school were teachers, designers, planners, and workers. Nor did they accept the policy of emigration which public men advocated then, as now, as a panacea for the ills of the old country.

They probed among the embers of Owenism and the remains of Chartism to find a way out of the present discontent. The weekly meetings at Maurice's house continued during the winter of 1848-49. A definite effort was made to get to know the mind of the people they wanted to help, and on April 28th Maurice wrote to Kingsley, "Walter Cooper the Chartist has encouraged and invited Ludlow and me to hold meetings with working men. We had a preparatory meeting at a coffee-house on Monday last, and I cannot tell you how much of kindly feeling, genial greeting, and sound sense we met with." These meetings developed into regular conferences held at the Cranbourne Coffee

Tavern.* Maurice usually took the chair, and men aired their grievances against the economic system under which they slaved, and roundly declaimed against the order of those in authority. It was illuminating to the group of aristocratic and middle-class men who were striving to bridge the gulf. It was of historic importance as a first effort to bring together men of various social grades in a common effort of mutual goodwill. The meetings became the battle-ground of ideas ; and where fighting was necessary Kingsley was never far away. He sacrificed much to be present, and got to know the aspirations, as well as the disappointments, of the workmen. And he took part in the discussions in a frank, manly way that promoted good fellowship and cleared the way for confidence. At one of the meetings a violent attack was made on the clergy, and the temper-clouds gathered when Kingsley rose, " folded his arms across his chest, threw his head back, and began—with the stammer which always came at first when he was much moved, but which fixed everyone's attention at once—' I am a Church of England parson '—a long pause—' and a Chartist,' "† and then he explained how far he thought them right ; and unfolded the views he had given in his placard and his letters. It was a tense moment ; it established Parson Lot's unpopularity with the men of great possessions ; and gave the derided reformers a new champion from a quarter in which they had expected little sympathy.

One thing was revealed at these meetings. The questions that concerned the ordinary men in the works as well as the man on the street were not the games of

* Coffee taverns were the recognised propaganda rooms of the early XIXth Century reformers. One was opened by Lovett in Gray's Inn Road, as a means of combined livelihood and propaganda.

† T. Hughes' Prefatory Memoir to " Alton Locke "—in which, however, the year is wrongly given as 1848. It was 1849.

" in or out " played by the party politicians. They were husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers to whom the comforts of family life were the first cares. Their homes were the altars of national welfare. Their troubles were economic rather than political. Whigs and Tories soared into realms of governmental institutions that seemed far removed from the breakfast table, and high above the attics in which they sought the slumber of exhaustion and malnutrition. This view dawned upon the Christian Socialists. Kingsley expressed the revulsion against materialistic politics when referring to the *nouveaux riches* of Manchester.

During the half-century ending 1848, he declared,

" they were not even free traders till they found that cheap corn meant cheap wages. . . . The mere fact that life in Manchester was shortened 17 years in comparison to life in the country is very awful."

Facts like these from the industrial centres hit him, a lover of rural England, sharply. That autumn Ludlow went to Paris and investigated the *associations ouvrières* —societies for productive co-operation. There he thought he found the key to unlock the door that kept English workmen from sharing the full proceeds of their own labour and organising themselves for useful service, rather than the pleasure of the employer or the fun of the idle rich. He became exalted with the zeal and the self-devotion of those French workmen. " It seemed to me," he told a clerical meeting in London, in October, 1895, " that they offered the best material solution for the immediate difficulties of the labour question in England as well as in France. I told what I had seen to my friends, and they were all of opinion that funds should, if possible, be raised for setting up an association of working men in London on a basis similar to that adopted in Paris."

CHAPTER XI.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TAILORS' ASSOCIATION.

IN 1849 there were 14,000 women employed on slop work in London; and 11,400 of these were under the age of 20 years. Their average earnings were from 1s. 8d. to 2s. 6d. per week.* Three out of every four garments sold throughout the country were made under what was known as the "slop system," the essence of which was the method of contracting and sub-contracting. On such facts as these Henry Mayhew had startled the world just before Christmas, 1849, with his articles on "The Condition of the Working Tailors" in the *Morning Chronicle*. Kingsley and his friends pondered over them, and a furore was created when Parson Lot's pamphlet on "Cheap Clothes and Nasty" appeared with its comparison of English clothes-makers with the paletot of King Ryence, the legendary king of Ireland and Denmark, and the Meudon tanneries described by Carlyle in "Past and Present."

With righteous scorn Kingsley exposed the methods of Nebuchadnezzar & Co., the "Emporium of Fashion," and called upon the lovers of "sweet competition" to write an epic on "The Consecration of Cannibalism." And having with fine dramatic instinct exposed the economic disease that was eating

* From lecture by Thomas Hughes, at Reading, February 3rd, 1852. Published at 4d. by Wm. Pickering in London and Macmillan & Co. at Cambridge.

into the heart of the nation, Parson Lot assailed " our modern eleventh commandment—' Buy cheap and sell dear,' " as " damnable." It was strong language for a clergyman ; but Parson Lot recognised that there are times when the clergy must use the words of the world for the world to understand. And sweating was damnable—" not Christianity only, but common humanity cries out against it." From exposing the Government, the clergy, the gentry, and the workmen in their maintenance of the system Parson Lot gave his plan to end the " outrage " :—

1. " That no man who calls himself a Christian—no man who calls himself a man—shall ever disgrace himself by dealing at any show-shop or slop-shop."

2. " Yet, secondly, a dozen, or fifty, or a hundred journeymen say to one another : ' It is competition that is ruining us, and competition is division, disunion, every man for himself, every man against his brother. The remedy must be in association, co-operation, self-sacrifice for the sake of one another.' "*

Parson Lot was no unpractical, dreamy idealist who regarded men as cabbages to be planted in rows in some industrial phantasmagoria. Having urged the establishment of associated workshops he appealed to the honourable master tailors to provide properly ventilated workrooms.

" I believe," declared Parson Lot, " that they will not lose by it —because it is right. God will take care of their money. The world, it comes out now, is so well ordered by Him, that model lodging houses, public baths, wash-houses, insurance offices, all pay a reasonable profit to those who invest money in them—perhaps associate workshops will do the same."†

And then came an insighted glimpse into the future—and an anticipation of the weakness of the associate workshops that helps to place Kingsley in the line of the prophets who, from Amos and Moses to Maurice and Parson Lot, have revealed to men that their release from the bondage of Egypt or the bondage of Britain

* From " Cheap Clothes and Nasty."
† Ibid.

depends upon the use they make of what they already possess.

"*It is by securing custom, far more than by gifts or loans of money, that we can help the operatives.* We should but hang a useless burthen of debt round their necks by advancing capital, without affording them the means of disposing of their produce."

Tailors' workshops were set up and altogether a dozen working-men's associations—3 tailors', 2 builders', 3 shoemakers', 1 piano makers', 1 printers', 1 smiths', 1 bakers'. There were also a Needlewomen's Association and a Ladies' Guild. They did not live beyond their youth, for they had no organised market for their produce, and the workmen of that day did not realise, as do four-and-a-half million of them now, that upon their own demand for fairly-produced articles depends the self-employment of the millions of artisans engaged in the home trade of this island.

On February 12th, 1850, the London Tailors' Association commenced at 34, Castle Street East, London, W.—parallel with Oxford Street and running into Regent Street. A writer in *The Operative* recorded that " the house and premises are respectable but unpretending." A meeting had been held at the Mechanics' Institute, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, E.C., at which twelve men agreed to start work for the new venture. The members of the Society for Promoting Working-men's Associations examined their wardrobes, wrote to their friends, and exerted themselves to find work for the journeymen on the way to industrial justice. They started operations at 7 a.m., and by working 9½ hours a day secured an average weekly wage of 20s. each the first month. Orders came, and in the second month, by working another half-hour daily, they earned £1. 2s. 6d. a week—a great advance on the remuneration exposed

by Parson Lot in "Cheap Clothes and Nasty," to the original issue of which he added a postscript—not reprinted with "Alton Locke"—in which he inserted the resolutions adopted at the Mechanics' Institute meeting, as follows :—

1. "That individual selfishness as embodied in the competitive system lies at the root of the evils under which English industry now suffers. That in the tailoring trade in particular, competition among the masters has introduced the practice of giving out piece-work to be done at home, out of which has grown the slop-trade, with all its horrors, and that competition among the journeymen has abetted the exactions of the slop-seller, by calling forth the class of 'sweaters,' or middlemen—those deadly parasites of labour."

2. "That the remedy for the evils of competition lies in the brotherly and Christian principle of co-operation—that is, of joint work with shared or common profits ; and that this principle might be widely and readily applied in the formation of 'Tailors' Working Associations.'"

3. "That the existence of working associations in other trades co-operating with similar institutions in our own would, by an interchange of produce, and a consequent increased consumption on the part of the working classes, open a vast and almost new home market for the productions of English industry. And that this meeting pledges itself to support all such attempts to free the people from the evils of individual competition."

Parson Lot added that, "thither, please God, we intend to go and see them at work, and, in the meantime, we entreat all Christian men to be there before us, and, having pondered the contents of the advertisement on the back of this tract, add the weight of their custom, their character, their prayers to this, the shrewdest blow, as it seems to us, yet aimed at Mammon in our Land." And Kingsley himself often went to the tailors' workshop, as well as to the printers' establishment on the ground floor.

A letter was also inserted in the pamphlet from Walter Cooper, the secretary, who pointed out that the men were "mutually bound to devote one-third of their net profits to the extension of their numbers," and that all work was done on the premises ; no

Sunday labour was allowed; the books and accounts were open to every customer, and workshops could be inspected every day between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.—a new and open system of business in clear contrast with the "secret diplomacy" known as "free competition" that was dominating the artisans of that day. The trade for the first year was £4,000.

Custom was mainly with the friends of the promoters. Holyoake, in his history of the Rochdale Pioneers, wrote that "The 'Christian Socialists,' inspired by eloquent rectors, and directed by transcendant professors, aided by the lawyer mind, and what was of no small importance, the very purse of Fortunatus himself, have made but small work of association." As a matter of historic fact, the money advanced by Neale and others was a hindrance in many respects, and the cause of their undoing—as Parson Lot had anticipated, unless backed by custom and trade. On the premises of the working tailors was a Working Printers' Association. They started well; Robert Owen—who was too immersed in making a new world to have much to do with the co-operative repair of the old one in which he lived*—gave them a little work, Kingsley sent them orders for printing and T. Hughes and E. V. Neale provided funds when the manager refused to account for payments received. "What would have been a success," wrote J. Bedford Leno (who† with Gerald Massey had launched the *Spirit of Freedom*, and who joined the printers in Castle Street East after Massey became associated with the tailors) in his "Aftermath":—

*C. E. Raven, in his "Christian Socialism," quotes Ludlow as writing in the *Spectator* that Owen "never took any practical part in promoting Co-operation," and the Rochdale Pioneers prospered without his help.

† See Leno's Autobiography published by Reeves & Turner, 1892.

" was converted into failure by drink and dishonesty. We left and Mr. Neale lost every farthing of the money he had ventured in the business. . . . In a few years after their starting the whole of these societies passed out of existence. There were doubtless many contributing causes, but the most important were internal. Neither managers nor associates were equal to the requirements of the new system. The elected managers, unused to power, started to live extravagantly. They sought each other's company, and at a tavern, and thus gave encouragement to drinking habits, till there was scarcely a sober man among them. As for the associates, the majority cared for the success of their associations just so far as they served their interests. In order to prove that I am not libelling them, I will mention a single fact that fully substantiates my statement. After getting co-operative prices for their labour they refused to purchase off each other. The shoemakers went elsewhere for their hats, the hatters went somewhere else for their shoes, and so on, because they thought they could get them cheaper. This was fully established at a Council meeting."

No wonder that Kingsley, in 1856, wrote to a Manchester correspondent* that " Association will be the next form of industrial development for production ; but it will require two generations of previous training both in morality and in drill to make the workmen capable of it." And ten years after that T. Hughes, in a letter I have discovered in an out-of-the-way corner of *The Working Man*,† gave a triple explanation of the non-success of the old associations, as follows :—

The first of the old associations failed because the manager proved to be thoroughly incompetent and dishonest.‡

The second failed from want of insufficient capital and disputes among the associates.

The third failed because, having been started in the ready money or shop business, in reliance on large custom from trade societies and other organised bodies of working people, that custom was never forthcoming.

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* J. Nichols—see " Kingsley's Memories and Letters," Vol. II.

† The " Working Man," November 17th, 1866, published by Cassell.

‡ In 1860 the Tailors' Association collapsed when Walter Cooper, who had become vicar's warden at a West End church, was convicted of falsifying the books of the society.

CHAPTER XII.

WHERE THE TAILORS TOILED.

THE days of pilgrimages are not over. Visitors from other lands stream into Rochdale to gaze upon "th' owd weyvurs'" shop in Toad Lane, from which radiated the dividend system of the co-operative movement. There are many who still go into the West Central district of London to trace the few remaining links with those who sought the application of the idea of association in production as well as in distribution. Charlotte Street, at No. 76, in which the Central Co-operative Agency was housed, and at No. 14, of which, Robert Owen had earlier heralded the "New Moral World," is now so comprehensively continental that the church of St. John's (where Kingsley delivered "The Message of the Church to Labouring Men") and the College for Women are the chief British survivals.

Castle Street East, W., where the first group of working tailors was established in 1850, and where the Hall of Association provided an educational and social centre before the full idea materialised in the Working Men's College, has changed its name as well as its character. Twenty years ago I was familiar with the haunts of the Chartists, Christian Socialists, Co-operators, and Pre-Raphaelites around Bloomsbury and behind Oxford Street as far west as Regent Street. Lately I revisited these squares and streets. Many of the houses have been converted into hotels and flats, and the premises where Kingsley directed his friends for

new raiment have suffered much alteration. No. 34 was subsequently changed into Portland Mansions, but is now divided into suites of business premises. In 1850, there was a great people's market with open-air stalls at the Regent Street end ; but as it was observable by members of the Royal Family, on their drives from Buckingham Palace to Euston, it was removed to Great Titchfield Street. How one coffee-stall keeper reaped a full reward is an unpublished story of ground landlordism that requires another Kingsley to give it dramatic setting.

What was then Castle Street East, W., is now known as Eastcastle Street, W. Confusion arose when people gave their full address with the termination of " East," and the addition of the postal direction " West," so that the alteration to Eastcastle Street has conveniened the present residents and caretakers, while disguising the name of the thoroughfare identified with the author of " Alton Locke." I record this for the benefit of future historians endeavouring to trace the *locale* of the early co-operative experiments. After a variegated course of development the movement is getting out of the back streets and buildings in which it began into the main current of life and traffic.

Co-operative banking that E. V. Neale tried in 1859 and J. M. Ludlow advocated years before it actually commenced in Manchester, is now located in Kingsway, where also is the London centre of Collective Co-operative Life Assurance. This is a manifestation of the spirit of the mutual friendly society which Kingsley, so long ago as 1852, declared to be the essence of co-operation. The Rochdale Pioneers were among the first to discover the material advantages of association ; the Christian Socialists secured the legalised protection of

those advantages and widened the outlook to embrace the whole welfare of man. And when the working people, shaking off their ease and apathy, consider how their path was cleared by the sacrifice of position, prestige, and purse by others, when they were outcasts —economically, politically, and educationally—in their own country, they will turn to Eastcastle Street, W., as the home of a cause that is rising Phœnix-like, and justifying all the wealth of mind and soul and body that Kingsley and his friends bestowed upon it.

OLD AND NEW.*

A Parable.

See how the autumn leaves float by decaying,
Down the wild swirls of the rain-swollen stream :
So fleet the works of men, back to their earth again ;
Ancient and holy things fade like a dream.

Nay ! see the spring-blossoms steal forth a-maying,
Clothing with tender hues orchard and glen ;
So, though old forms pass by, ne'er shall their spirit die,
Look ! England's bare boughs show green leaf again.

* One of four poems contributed by Kingsley to "Politics for the People," and included in the complete volume of "Poems by Charles Kingsley," published by Macmillan & Co.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS IN CO-OPERATION.

THE day after the Working Tailors' Association opened its workrooms a series of Tracts on Christian Socialism was commenced, and in November of the same year the *Christian Socialist, a Journal of Association*, came as a thunderclap into the quietened conditions that followed the outburst of the previous winter. It had a circulation of 1,500 straightaway, and this rose to 3,000 in 1851 when it was published at 183, Fleet Street, by J. J. Bezer, a one-eyed Chartist whom the Christian Socialists set up as a publisher, as no publisher could be found for the journal, nicknaming him "Monops." Originally he was a costermonger.

Parson Lot reappeared with Letters to Chartists, and to Landlords, as well as articles on the National Gallery and the British Museum, in which he took a twentieth-century view that startled the crinoline age in which he lived. In all he had a score of contributions; he also suggested subjects likely to be useful. "It seems to me," he wrote the editor, "that, to spread the paper, you must touch the workman at all his points of interest." Mrs. Gaskell had six signed articles, and altogether the *Christian Socialist* had an influence far beyond its circulation; it excited the apostles of *laissez faire* to violent fury. It won the respect though not the adhesion of the people who approached co-operation from a different angle to that of Kingsley. Even Owenite writers recognised that a new force had arrived.

We welcome with much pleasure the issue of a new advocate of Association, the *Christian Socialist*, "conducted by several of the Promoters of the London Workingmen's Associations." These talented and benevolent persons—members chiefly of the clerical and legal professions—are exerting themselves most zealously to promote the amelioration of the condition of the working classes, both practically, by forming working and trading societies of the industrious classes, and educationally, by extending a knowledge of the advantages of Association. . . . We hail this direction of attention to Associative questions as a sure indication of progress towards true principles and improved practice; and we cordially wish great success to these exertions, and a wide circulation to this New Journal; for they will aid more usefully to create and extend the pure spirit of charity and universal goodwill, which excludes neither class, sect, party, country, nor colour from its wide embrace; and to prepare the public mind for the reception of a system of pure and undefiled truth, goodness, and rationality.*

This is significant of the recognition of sincerity from the school founded by the man who believed that "all religions were wrong."

Unfortunately, all Owen's social missionaries were not so frank in their welcome. Holyoake's attitude passed through several phases, although I have the assurance of his daughter that "my father very much admired the men in the Christian Socialist movement, and his close friendship with E. Vansittart Neale testified to this. He only complained that they 'did not keep distinct things separate'—that is to say, co-operation and religion. It seems to me," continues Mrs. Emilie Holyoake Marsh, "that he did not quite realise that it was their religion which turned Kingsley and other Christian Socialists to the work of raising the condition of the workers, and they adopted the co-operative method to do it."† Mr. Joseph McCabe, in his "Life of Holyoake," writes with straitened generosity of the men of 1848–1854; but one prefers the later estimate‡ of Holyoake that "none were more

* Robert Owen's *Journal*, No. 2, November 9th, 1850. In the issue for August 2nd, 1851, Dr. Henry Travis, who edited the journal, was equally sympathetic.

† Letter from Holyoake's daughter to the author, July 22nd 1923.

‡ "History of Co-operation," Vol. II.

resolute in maintaining his own opinions than he (Kingsley), and none were more considerate in their judgments of opinions opposed to him "—a fine tribute to the charity and the tolerance that Parson Lot reserved for sincere objectors. But when miserable self-interest weighted the opposition Kingsley's manly intolerance of wrong shot out like a searchlight, scattering those who hid their meanness in the darkness.

He suffered for his outspokenness. In the autumn of 1851 Croker made an attack on Maurice and Kingsley in the *Quarterly Review*, charging them with inciting the public by means of their "Revolutionary Literature." Then the storm broke, and Dr. Jelf, the Principal of King's College, wrote to Maurice—who was one of the Professors—about the uncomfortable feeling that was manifesting itself in many quarters, and describing Kingsley as "a reckless and dangerous writer" who used the Scripture in a mode "indescribably irreverent." Jelf had seen Maurice's name in large "placards in inky characters in Fleet Street," side by side with that of Kingsley, and urged that Maurice "will be identified with Mr. Kingsley, and Mr. Kingsley is identified [through co-operation] with Mr. Holyoake, and Mr. Holyoake is identified with Tom Paine. There are only three links between King's College and the author of 'The Rights of Man.'" Such was the logic of a college principal three-quarters of a century ago. And "the house that Jelf built"—to vary the nursery rhyme with which his reasoning seemed to accord—had such support from his Council that ultimately, despite the disagreement of Gladstone and other men of learning, Maurice had to resign.*

* The story is fully told in "The Life of F. D. Maurice," by his son, Sir F. Maurice.

Towards the close of 1851 the size of the *Christian Socialist* was halved, its contents confined to news of the workmen's associations, and it was edited for four months by Hughes. Ludlow resumed with the issue for April 12th, 1852, and carried on till June 28th, 1852, when Kingsley's wistful "farewell" (which is reprinted in the volume of his poems as "on the death of a certain journal") revealed his faith in the future and his confidence in "heroes yet unborn,"

> "Who in the light of fuller day,
> Of purer science, holier laws,
> Bless us, faint heralds of their cause,
> Dim beacons of their glorious way."

The promoters had lost £400 on the *Christian Socialist*, but had gained what Kingsley finely described as "a silent-working faith . . that tells more, even on opponents, than ten thousand platform pyrotechnics."

In the summer of 1850 a Central Co-operative Agency was suggested. It was the first effort at bringing societies together for mutual trade, and contained the root of the Co-operative Wholesale Society of to-day.* It was established at 76, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, W., and on October 24th, 1850, the London Co-operative Store was opened there. The Deed setting forth its constitution was drawn up between "E. V. Neale, Esq., and Thomas Hughes, Esq., as Trustees, and Messrs. A. L. J. Lechevalier, Joseph Woodin, and Lloyd Jones as partners"—the trading name of Lechevalier, Woodin, Jones & Company being adopted. Mr. Woodin was appointed as manager. The object of the institution was to act "as agents for the consumers, in the distribution of articles of consumption, and promoting the progress

* Abraham Greenwood in *Co-operator*, March, 1863.

of the principles of association by assisting associations of working men to carry on their respective occupations, and by organising the interchange of productions, to form a centre of commercial exchange between associations." At the inaugural public meeting E. V. Neale presided, and described the intention of the promoters to assist provincial stores and also help the establishment of local stores in the Metropolis. He had in mind the association of producers and consumers when he went on to say, "At present those occupied in trades and handicrafts were cooped up in towns, resident in back lanes, courts, and alleys, and compelled to pay a high price for the most wretched and unhealthy lodgings. Now, what did they want to enable them to escape from such physically injurious circumstances? Simply to ensure them a market for the articles they produced." The great railway boom of 1846 had burst, and Neale, appreciating "these days of cheap and rapid communication," and anticipating the modern Garden City Movement, went on to suggest that "along the great lines of communication, new, superior, and economical dwellings and workshops could be constructed, where the producers could pursue their labours amidst healthful conditions, and uncontaminated by the debasing influence inseparable from our crowded towns. If the articles they produced were all sent to a common centre, in which they had confidence, and all their supplies in like manner drawn from it—it was possible for them to assist themselves, when they took up the cause of association, with a degree of rapidity and success which was perfectly impossible under any other principle that could be devised." But the world was not ready for central co-operative agencies, and the

enterprise,* like the productive efforts, disappeared.

These early ventures which seem commonplace to-day were regarded as threatening a tremendous upheaval of our whole social, commercial, and political edifice. Maurice as the leader of the group and Kingsley as the herald drew upon themselves the attacks of those in authority. But the movement seemed to grow. Many provincial societies were formed, and on the last day of 1850 Maurice, accompanied by several of the Council of Promoters, went by night train to Manchester to attend the New Year festival of the Labour Redemption Society at Bury. The next day they went to a co-operative mill at Bury, visited the Pioneers' store at Rochdale, and attended the Manchester Mechanics' Institute in the evening. Their report to their colleagues in London was that "what was better than either tea or speeches, good as these all were, the members of the Council through this visit came to know personally many of the wisest and the best of the working men in that part of Lancashire, men who are leading the co-operative movement in their own towns." Ludlow and Hughes were much in the north in 1851, and came into touch with several of the men who were organising co-operative societies that were able to hold together by the sincerity and sacrifices of their members.

Kingsley urged the idea of the application of the co-operative principle to all the circumstances of the age. On January 28th, 1851, he wrote to the *Morning Chronicle*, declaring that "we as Socialists believe the sanctity of family life to be the germ of all society," and mentioning that Professor Maurice had recently

* The full constitution is printed in "Five Years in the Land of Refuge, by J. Lechevalier (St. André).

told a meeting of Manchester working men that they owed their machines, their manufactures, and their city itself to co-operation—not a new principle, but the oldest of all. And in the following May he gave a lecture that occupied two hours on "the application of associative principles and methods to agriculture"—a subject on which he knew something, for he farmed his acres at Eversley. At one end of the rectory is the bell that he rang to call the labourers to their meals in the great kitchen, where they took food and counsel from their friendly farming rector. In London Parson Lot had a fashionable audience to which he discoursed on the value of town sewage for farm cultivation, and dealt in a very practical and informing way with a technical subject. And then he struck out ironically with an appeal for the labourers who were said to be free :—

> Let us clear our minds of cant, said Kingsley, gentlemen and ladies. What is the meaning of this word free ? If it is profitable and right to make clothes by sweating, it is profitable and right to cultivate land by paupers, and still more profitable and right to cultivate it by slaves. I really do not see any reason upon economic grounds why you should care so much for the condition of those slaves ; why you should not breed them for your own use as you do cattle and horses, and breed no more of them than you want—why you should not ascertain carefully the age at which their years of work begin to decline and then, instead of unprofitably supporting them in almshouses and unions, just make away with them painlessly by a few drops of strychnine, melt them down in the sulphuric acid tank, and drill them with your root crops. I will engage that any farmer or union that will have courage logically and consistently to carry out in that way the economy of labour and the reproduction of capital, will farm, in spite of all free trade whatsoever, at a splendid profit without breaking a single law of what is now called Political Economy.

Thus he created an atmosphere somewhat disquieting to the responsible followers of the orthodox maxims and phrases of those who were content to let bad alone. But he served to awaken a new faith in the co-operative experiments of his time.

CHAPTER XIV.

LEGALISING CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

THE experience in connection with the workmen's associations proved the need for legal protection. This had been realised by William Lovett, who was the storekeeper of the First London Co-operative Trading Association at 19, Greville Street, Hatton Garden, where the British Association for Promoting Co-operative Knowledge had its headquarters, with Lovett as hon. secretary, in 1829. Most of the societies associated with the early co-operative movement disappeared within four years. "The chief, or at least the most prominent, causes of their failure were religious differences, the want of legal security, and the dislike which the women had to confine their dealing to one shop."* It was possible for "a thief to plead that being a member of the society he only robbed himself, although he stole the shares of everybody else."† The introduction of an amended Friendly Societies Bill by Sotheron Estcourt, allowing societies to be formed for any purpose of a provident or benevolent nature, whether calculated by way of average or not, gave the Council of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations an opportunity of urging their friends in Parliament to secure a committee of inquiry into the investments of the middle and working classes. This was appointed, on April 16th, 1852, on the motion

* "The Life and Struggles of William Lovett," by himself, p. 43.
† Holyoake's "History of Co-operation," Vol. I.

of R. A. Slaney, M.P., who became chairman. Abraham Greenwood of Rochdale, the Leeds Redemption Society, and others communicated with Hughes and Ludlow, who wanted the retention of the "frugal investment of the savings of members" clause* retaining, but the extension of the Friendly Societies Act to societies formed for production as well as for distribution. The committee held nine sittings, and examined the following witnesses: J. M. Ludlow, E. V. Neale, Thomas Hughes, W. Cooper (secretary of the Tailors), J. Stuart Mill, Lloyd Jones, Sir Denis le Marchand, J. Stewart, T. Wilson, S. Rowley, J. Millbank, R. T. Restiaux, H. Bellenden Ker (a legal friend of Ludlow's), R. H. Jones, St. Andre Lechevalier (a French spy who, having ingratiated himself into the group, was subsequently discovered to be "a sharper," as Maurice described him), J. Clarkson (baker), and J. H. James. The evidence given by John Stuart Mill was remarkable for the clearness with which he appreciated what the subsequent experience of co-operative societies has abundantly confirmed, viz., the enormously large proportion of the total produce of labour which is used up in distributing its proceeds :—

* This clause of the original Friendly Societies Act is interesting as indicating the individualistic character of the early societies as compared with the collective welfare idea of the Christian Socialists and the co-operators.

That Act, among the purposes for which it authorised societies to be formed, contained one worded as follows : "For the frugal investment of the savings of the members, for the better enabling them to purchase food, firing, clothes, or other necessities, or the tools or implements of their trade or calling, or to provide for the education of their children, or kindred, with or without the assistance of charitable donations. Provided always that the shares in any such investment society shall not be transferable, and that the investment of each member shall accumulate and be applied for the sole benefit of the member investing, or the husband, wife, children, or kindred of such member ; and that no part thereof shall be appropriated to the relief, maintenance, or endowment of any other person or persons whomsoever, and that the full amount of the balance due according to the rules of such society to such member shall be paid to him or her on withdrawing from the society ; and that no such last-mentioned society shall be entitled or allowed to invest any part of its funds with the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt."

"When it has happened to anyone," said the witness, replying to question 832, "as it must have happened to most people, to have inquired, or to have known in particular cases, what portion of the price paid at a shop for an article really goes to the person who made it, and forms his remuneration, I think anyone who has had occasion to make inquiries into that fact must often have been astonished to find how small it is, and how much less a proportion the remuneration of the real labour bears to the whole price than would have been supposed beforehand; and it is of great importance to consider what is the cause of this. Now, one thing is very important to remember in itself, and it is very important that the working classes should be aware of it, and that is that this does *not* arise from the extravagant remuneration of capital. When the security is good, capital can be borrowed in any quantity at little more than 3 per cent. . . . Therefore it is not from the remuneration of capital that the evil proceeds. I think it proceeds from two causes. One of them, which does not strictly fall into the inquiry which the committee are carrying on, is the very great, I may say extravagant, portion of the whole produce of the community that now goes to mere distributors, the immense amount that is taken up by the different classes of dealers, and especially by retailers. Competition, no doubt, has some tendency to reduce this scale of remuneration, but I am afraid that in most cases, looking at it on the whole, the effect of competition is, as in the cases of the fees of professional people, rather to divide the amount among a large number, and to diminish the share of each, than to lower the scale of what is obtained by the class generally."

"I think," said Mill, replying to another question, "there is no way in which the working classes can make so beneficial a use of their savings, both to themselves and to society, as by the formation of associations to carry on the business with which they are acquainted, and in which they are themselves engaged as workpeople, provided always that experience should show that these associations can hold together."

A Bill was introduced (drafted by Ludlow and entitled an Act to Legalise the Formation of Industrial and Provident Partnerships) and carried through Parliament as the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852. The Act provided for the division of profits on purchases, the restriction of interest on capital to 5 per cent and on loans to 6 per cent, and also for the limitation of the liability of members to the amount of their shareholdings. There was a curious restriction on the amount of land which could be held by a society, this being limited to one acre allowed

for the offices. By 1858 the law relating to co-operative societies was contained in four Acts of Parliament. Sotheron Estcourt, M.P. (who had backed the Bill introduced by R. A. Slaney, M.P., which became the Act of 1852), with E. V. Neale went to confer with Sir Henry Thring, the Counsel for the Government, " who surprised us by proposing that in place of the machinery of trustees and officers to sue and be sued by which the industrial and provident societies had been carried on, the societies should be incorporated and so enabled to hold their property and carry on their business in their own names. This proposal we willingly accepted."*

R. A. Slaney continued his interest in the legislative security of co-operation, and in 1861 introduced a Bill, which became an Act in the following year, to amend the Industrial and Provident Societies Act of 1852. He told the House of Commons that " among the discoveries of the present age none had been more valuable to the poorer classes than that of combination and co-operation in trading societies. . . . The Bill he asked leave to introduce provided that the principle of limited liability, which was applicable to all commercial undertakings, should apply to these co-operative societies." Writing to *The Co-operator* in August, 1861, Mr. Slaney suggested that an additional object to the supply of the daily necessaries of life " might be to provide improved dwellings in or near to towns, for the working classes, who would thus be part owners of their own healthy houses "—thus revealing a grasp of the co-operative principle that many societies have since whittled down

* E. V. Neale's article in " C.W.S. Annual," 1887, which contains a full analysis of the various Acts legalising co-operative societies.

to individual ownership facilitated on building society terms. The Christian Socialists never lost touch with the work of protecting co-operative societies in the days when they could not afford legal advice; and their effort in securing statutory recognition should never be forgotten by those who share their heritage. Ludlow* attended the earlier Co-operative Congresses and advocated the formation of the Central Co-operative Board, the forerunner of the present Co-operative Union. He edited some of the first Congress reports, giving them a distinctive orderliness in a comprehensive index which has served as a pattern for official documents both in State offices and voluntary associations. Writing in *Co-partnership*, October, 1894, with reference to the original legislation, he observed:

"And every subsequent Industrial and Provident Societies Act, except the one of 1893, was prepared by one or other member of the original Council of Promoters, mostly by Mr. Neale; the Act of 1871 by myself; whilst the bills were mostly brought in by Lord Ripon, who as Lord Goderich had been an active member of our Council, and Mr. Hughes, while in the House. The whole of co-operative legislation, therefore, beyond the original 'frugal investment clause' of the 9 and 10 Vict. c. 27, which gave no power to deal with the public, until the Act of 1893, belongs to the Christian Socialists."

"Honour falls to such as we
From hearts of heroes yet unborn."

"Failure? While tide-floods rise and boil
Round cape and isle, in port and cove,
Resistless, star-led from above:
What though our tiny wave recoil?"

From "On the death of a certain Journal," 1852.

* In *Co-partnership*, November, 1911, appeared a full account of his career—written from notes previously supplied to me by Ludlow himself.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAGNA CHARTA OF CO-OPERATION.

THE Magna Charta of Co-operation received Royal Assent on June 30th, 1852. Simultaneously (on June 28th) the last issue of *The Christian Socialist* was published; the Central Co-operative Agency was outgrowing its accommodation at 76, Charlotte Street, and, for the first time, delegates from provincial co-operative societies met with the Society of Promoters of Working Men's Associations in London—at the Hall of Association, 34, Castle Street East, W., which had been built that year by the North London Working Builders' Association, under the workrooms of the Tailors' Association. F. C. Penrose, the surveyor of St. Paul's Cathedral, designed the Hall, which held six hundred people.

Maurice and his friends had demonstrated the vitality of the co-operative movement; they had established both productive and distributive societies; they had brought them into association with each other; they had secured their recognition before the law, and established their security. And, again, in 1862, and later, the same legal minds* continued to strengthen and consolidate the constitutional position of the movement. Even Holyoake admitted, in the *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1887, that "the subsequent (*i.e.*, after Rochdale) development of co-operation has

* E. V. Neale, as general secretary of the Co-operative Union, drafted the amendments in the Act of 1862, and J. M. Ludlow, as registrar watched their development with a helpfulness beyond officialism.

been greatly due to the interest which Professor Maurice, Canon Kingsley, Mr. Vansittart Neale, Mr. Thomas Hughes, and Mr. J. M. Ludlow took in it. They promoted successive improvements in the law which gave the stores legal protection."

At that point the founders of the Christian Socialists regarded their work as done. It was now for the working men to continue the formation of societies and the working out of their own co-operative salvation. Christian Socialism was a principle to permeate and course through individuals and the societies they formed. It was not a Programme to proclaim its own desires and leave those who did not follow its standard in a condemned cell. As his son and biographer wrote of Maurice, "Beyond all things he dreaded becoming the head of a *party* of Christian Socialists."* And J. M. Ludlow had unconsciously anticipated the attitude of the subsequent critics who would mould human institutions according to ordered patterns and cast-iron designs. "In offering this machinery to others," wrote Ludlow,† "we are bound to protest against that idolatry of social mechanism which imagines society as a mere assemblage of wheels and strings, and not as a partnership of living men; which takes account of the form only, and not of the spirit which animates it." This view was emphasized by Maurice when several working-men's associations had been formed and their managers suggested the formation of a central organisation to secure efficient supervision and direction. "I did affirm distinctly," wrote Maurice to Ludlow in 1850, "that Christ had used councils and might use them when and how He

* "Life of F. D. Maurice."

† In "Politics for the People," No. 3, 1848.

pleased, as He may, for aught I know, construct central boards for the management of trade fraternities. But I do say that neither the Council nor the Central Board can make the fraternity, or establish the law or principle of it, and that if we build churches upon the decrees of councils, or associations upon decrees of central boards, we build upon the sand, and that when the rain comes our houses will fall, and that great will be the fall of them."* E. Vansittart Neale came into the movement bringing new ideas and fresh capital on seeing an advertisement of the establishment of the first tailors' association ; soon after a schism was imminent. He and Hughes wanted the Council of Promoters (who met several mornings at 6 a.m., at 458, New Oxford Street, to draw up a kind of constitution) to develop a central co-operative agency ; much discussion took place, and it was decided that Maurice should make known to the public that the Promoters " are distinct from the agency and are not responsible for any of their acts "—in which Neale and Hughes perfectly concurred. It, however, marked the beginning of two streams flowing from one spring—Maurice, Ludlow, Kingsley, Furnivall and Walsh concentrating upon educational problems through the Working Men's College, and the others giving their talents, their chances of social and political distinction and their full-hearted service to the cause of co-operation. Alas ! they, too, had their disillusionment.

* " Life of Maurice," Vol. II., p. 45.

CHAPTER XVI.

PARSON LOT IN A MAJORITY.

THUS in 1852 the time of preparation had gone, and the harvest was offered to those who had seen the growth but had not planted the seed.

In 1850 Kingsley was in correspondence with Thomas Cooper, and wrote him :—

"You are right, a thousand times right, in saying that the (co-operative) movement is a more important move than any Parliamentary one. It is to get room and power for such works and not merely for any abstract notions of political right that I fight for the suffrage."

Kingsley, in his "Alton Locke," had exposed the evils of the sweating system, leaving others to work out the remedies. But he saw the rightness of co-operation, and was among the little group who sat at the table* whereon the first code of rules for a working-man's co-operative productive society was drawn up—and on which this chapter is being written.

It was a great heritage that Kingsley and his friends gave to the co-operative movement in the Act of 1852—the crowning act of a wonderful year. The conference held at the Hall of Association on July 26th and 27th was both an explanation and a benediction. There were delegates and proxies from 28 societies, and Henry Smith, the representative of the Liverpool Tailors' Institute, was elected to the chair.

From the report that was issued by the Council and

* The table was presented by J. M. Ludlow to the Labour Co-partnership Association a few years before his death.

other contemporary records, one is able to visualise the scene. Octavia Hill also wrote an account* of the meeting, at which she was present.

At the conference following the passing of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act we see Kingsley among the co-operators in a businesslike way, helping them in the drafting of resolutions, mingling with the delegates in fraternal fashion, and delighting everybody by his optimism—an optimism all the more difficult that day as he "was suffering from a very severe faceache." This is a quotation from the Official Report, which noted among those present "the Rev. C. Kingsley, jun., who was warmly cheered on entering." The morning was devoted to detail matters, and Kingsley followed them with keen interest—for they indicated something of that drill and discipline two generations of which, he declared, would be required for fruition. He was an understrapper "and set the example of obedience." In the afternoon, the Conference considered an old problem that has long awaited solution; the mediæval guilds made an attempt; the British Legislature has tried with Acts of Parliament; but here was a co-operative conference considering the question "whether it should be a rule to sell all articles exactly for what they are." J. Sutcliffe (of the Bradford Working-men's Association) told the meeting that when people said to him "Why is this cloth which appears thicker and better cheaper than this which is thinner and feels poorer?" he honestly told them that "the one was made of Devil's dust and the other by fine work."

There was a great desire for some emphatic declaration of principle. Pencils began to travel over paper,

* "Life of Octavia Hill," by C. E. Maurice.

heads were scratched, working men who knew what they wanted struggled to put their ideas in writing, the lawyers were puzzling over the right phrasing, when Charles Kingsley flung across to Sutcliffe a resolution he had penned. The Bradford delegate looked steadily at the boldly flowing writing of Parson Lot, and realised how simply it told his meaning. Whereupon he proposed the draft that Kingsley had written; it was seconded by Thomas Hughes, and carried with hearty approval,

"That this Conference entreats all co-operative establishments, for the sake of the general good, to sell all articles exactly for what they know them to be, and to abstain, as much as possible, from the sale of all articles publicly known to be adulterated, even if demanded by their customers."

We hear much of Co-operation nowadays, but seldom is reference made to Kingsley, Ludlow, Hughes, Neale, and those who, by that resolution of 1852, emphasized the desire of the early co-operators for pure goods as well as good conditions. Yet it is upon that practical resolution that the idealism of the modern co-operative movement has been founded. Drafting the declaration of principle was not the only contribution made by Kingsley to a Conference that deserves frequent recollection. The question of extending the operations of societies to include the work of friendly societies for mutual help in times of sickness and emergency was broached. And when it was likely that delegates were drifting in all directions—as conferences were inclined to do then, as now—Charles Kingsley again interposed to point out that the "principle of the benefit society, that of mutual help, was not adjunct to co-operation but lay at the very root of it." And now there are many societies with emergency and distress funds exemplifying the mutual

help that " lay at the very root of " co-operation as defined by Kingsley over seventy years ago.

In the evening there were merry doings when London co-operators brought their wives to have a cheerful festival with the country delegates. Maurice was in the chair, and speech and song combined instruction and recreation in co-operative fashion. There were no formal resolutions ; but " sentiments " were in the order of the proceedings. Lloyd Jones, one of the brilliant orators of his time, voiced the sentiment of " association in trade and industry." Then came " Education : its blessings being made universal." William Allan, a leader in the engineering dispute of the previous year, spoke to that, and told how one mechanics' institute had twice voted for the purchase of "Alton Locke," but the president had threatened to resign if it was done. The announcement was received with great hilarity, and Kingsley himself joined in the laughter, as well as his painful faceache would allow. This was supplemented with cheers when he was called upon to give the third sentiment of the evening, one of thanks from the friends and promoters of working-men's associations to Mr. Slaney and those Members of Parliament and others to whose exertions they were chiefly indebted for the passing of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act. Fortunately, a summary of the speech of Parson Lot is recorded in the Report of that Conference, now preserved in the Library of the Working-men's College, from which I have been able to make a copy. He said :

" The passing of the Act was a small step, but a most important one in the co-operative movement. The effect of it would be to draw together what were vulgarly called the upper and lower classes. Watching the working of the idea in some rich but thinking men's minds, he was glad to see how they were coming round. There were many now looking on whom he did not know of, and who, before

long, would declare their true feeling, and perhaps some day we might be surprised to find where we had got friends. The working men, he was afraid, did not know how much they owed to Mr. Slaney, whose truth and earnestness in the matter had been wonderful."

Ludlow also addressed the meeting, and Louis Blanc, who frequently attended meetings arranged by the Christian Socialists, was called upon. Songs were sung, a presentation made to Maurice, and then the room was cleared for dancing. How Kingsley must have been gratified to see the working tailors and the co-operators realise, as they took their partners, that

> "When all the world is young, lad,
> And all the trees are green;
> And every goose a swan, lad,
> And every lass a queen.
> Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
> And round the world away.
> Young blood must have its course, lad,
> And every dog his day."

Verily the co-operators were coming into theirs.

Four years later Kingsley was writing to J. Nichols:

"Association for distribution is what I look to with far higher hope. I am sure, for example, that if the method of the people's stores and mills (flour) at Rochdale were generally carried out, the saving to wages, to public honesty, and (considering the present adulteration of goods) to public health, would be immense."

In the following year, 1857, he regarded as a slight matter that the associations had failed:

"But this I say," he continued in his downright and encouraging way, "because I believe that the failure of a hundred schemes would not alter my conviction, that they are attempts in the right direction; and I shall die in hope, not having received the promises, but beholding them afar off, and confessing myself a stranger and a pilgrim in a world of *laissez faire*. For it is my belief that not self-interest, but self-sacrifice, is the only law upon which human society can be grounded with any hope of prosperity and permanence. That self-interest is a law of nature I know well. That it ought to be the root law of human society I deny, unless society is to sink down again into a Roman empire, and a cage of wild beasts. I shall resist it, as I do any other snare of the devil."

And then he went on to say that while their schemes

of association had not succeeded he had learned much in the experiment, and that clearly. He added :

" I see one work to be done ere I die, in which (men are beginning to discover) Nature must be counteracted, lest she prove a curse and a destroyer, not a blessing and a mother ; and that is Sanitary Reform. Politics and political economy may go their way for me. If I can help to save the lives of a few thousand working people and their children, I may earn the blessing of God."*

Mrs. C. E. Maurice, whose mother and family were associated with the Needlewomen's and other societies helped by E. V. Neale, tells me that her sister's (Octavia Hill) interest in co-operation dated from her childhood, when she stayed with their grandfather, Dr. Southwood Smith, " the father of sanitary reform," and that her active help was given after reading Henry Mayhew's articles on " London Labour and the London Poor." They saw little of Kingsley as he rarely came to London, but they read his writings in the *Christian Socialist*, and attended the meetings at the Hall of Association. He did more direct work for sanitary reform, and Mrs. Maurice remembers the Ladies' Sanitary Association which he helped to start and which continued its intensive work for half a century before being superseded by a multiplicity of kindred associations—all proceeding from one fundamental base, although working along various tangential lines. This was in accord with Kingsley's declaration in the foregoing quotation.

Kingsley was the herald of the Christian Socialists. J. M. Ludlow was the initiator of the group, Maurice the prophet—but Kingsley's dramatic gifts, his vigorous challenging of the torpor of Christians and Parliamentary hopes of Chartists made him the best known of the band. To the Christian Socialists he became " the moniteur of co-operation." They started

* Letter to J. Bullar in " Letters and Memories."

in 1848 and finished in 1854 ; but their practical experiments opened a new avenue along which working folk could proceed in the light of their experience. And they recognised, more than did Robert Owen, the reason of the lack of commercial success. When the new warehouse of the Co-operative Wholesale Society Limited in Balloon Street, Manchester, was opened in May, 1869, J. M. Ludlow said it was seventeen years since he had visited Manchester, and that the co-operative efforts with which he had been associated had " failed from their very benevolence." It was on that occasion he foreshadowed a " fusion of forces " which has since developed in a political as well as an economic direction ; but his declaration of sixty years ago proved his farsighted understanding of a movement which he, more than any other man of his long years—1821 to 1911—helped to guide aright.

I feel every day more convinced that the uniting of the two great organisations—the co-operative and the trade union forces in co-operative effort—was the hope to which they were looking forward. These two bodies, by working together, might share the success of co-operative production. Both must co-operate.

I had many opportunities of meeting Ludlow after the first International Co-operative Congress in 1895 ; often he would attend co-operative conferences and listen with quiet satisfaction to the records of progress. And then he would quietly disappear happy in his confidence of the ultimate triumph of the spirit of Christian Socialism, a name " adopted* for the movement in a spirit of defiant protest, as denying that unbridled competition was the dominant law of any part of human life, and as bearing witness that the higher law of fellow-help ought to be recognised as in

* From a sermon preached in 1879 by J. Llewellyn Davies—who died in 1916, the last survivor of the Christian Socialists—in the church in Vere Street, London, W., where Maurice was incumbent from 1860 to 1869.

all parts of human life supreme." Our last conversation was at his home, in Shepherd's Bush, in August, 1911. Copies of his reports as the Registrar of the societies whose Act he had drafted were on the study table, and a portrait of Kingsley was on the wall. He talked of the industrial unrest then prevailing, and gently chided my dolorous outlook, for he could recall even more stirring times when the whole world was topsy-turvy. The veteran of 91 years was a convinced optimist; he believed men were better fitted for co-operation than they had been before. "When we started the workmen's associations in the fifties," he said, "there was not one workman in a thousand fit for co-operation. They were uneducated; they lacked confidence in each other; they had no education."

Institutions like the Working Men's College changed all that. But they were not greatly concerned in co-operation as a means of securing monetary economies for the consumer *per se*, and Tom Hughes declared that for his part "I distrust cheap tea and like to give a good price for my shirts." Kingsley was more inclined to favour co-operative societies as a means of helping the wage earners to secure full value for their expenditure, and in 1863 wrote :—

"I have been afraid that the co-operators should think that I had forgotten them, or proved false to my old convictions. I have not; I have been biding my time, and watching them do their work for themselves—the only hope of co-operative success. Those in London have for the most part bitterly disappointed me, though they have been helped and petted. Perhaps that is the very reason they have failed. Those in Scotland and the North of England have fulfilled my best hopes. They have done well—so well that John Bright on one side, and the *Times* on the other, are acknowledging their success . . . and it seems to me that the *Times* thinks co-operation has legs and arms. I always believed it."

There is no doubt that in his picturesque description of the London societies having failed through being

"helped and petted" Kingsley was right. The strength of the Rochdale Pioneers of 1844, as of the Sheerness Pioneers of 1816, was in their self-reliance. They had not the great heart and deep pockets of a Neale to draw upon. Out of the £13,560 capital of the Central Co-operative Agency in its first year only £480 was supplied by the workmen; and the agency failed. Of the £28 with which the Rochdale Pioneers began all was provided by the workers, and there are 4,500,000 followers of the Rochdale gleam to-day.

Though Maurice was the prophet among the Christian Socialists, J. M. Ludlow was the practical and inspiring founder and centre. It was an article of his in *Fraser's Magazine*, January, 1850, that contained the first public exposition of their plans, and aroused attention to their wrongs, following Henry Mayhew's more scathing exposure. It was at a meeting in his house that the project of starting a Working Tailors' Association was first brought forward. It was he who wrote to Maurice that "What they had to do was to Christianise Socialism" or to overwhelm certain Owenite presumptions. And it was he who interested Maurice in the new movement of co-operation, and who fostered the enthusiasm of Kingsley, Neale, Hughes, Furnivall, C. B. Mansfield and others in the work. They all, as Dr. Furnivall admitted, knew little about the matter, but they readily gave themselves to Ludlow's better judgment and enthusiastic initiative.

His interest in all phases of co-operation was maintained to the end, and when, in 1909, I asked him for a message to the modern movement, he replied:—

"PULL ALL TOGETHER, AND THE MORE THE WORK DONE, EVEN BY THE WEAK.

"PULL AGAINST ONE ANOTHER, AND THE STRONGER THE PULLERS THE GREATER THE WASTE."

In 1866, Kingsley was invited to a meeting at Manchester, and wrote expressing his interest and his view : " all that is required, I believe, in such cases is common honesty and a good English determination to abide by the decisions of majorities whether pleasant to the minority or not." At the Bolton Co-operative Congress, in 1872, news was received of the death of Maurice, and Hughes returned to town leaving a letter that was read to the delegates in which he wrote : " Mr. Maurice was the president 24 years ago of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations in which I learnt my first lessons in Co-operation. I am sure the Congress will sympathise with me, even if they do not feel as I do, that the best and wisest Englishman I have ever known has left us." And at the public meeting J. M. Ludlow described Maurice as exemplifying the idea that a co-operator was " a fellow-worker, not a worker for himself but for others " —a view that Kingsley had held and hoped to see established among the co-operators whom he regarded as the salt of the earth.

And the co-operators honoured Kingsley for his helpfulness as well as his selflessness. There was a memorable scene at the Co-operative Congress in London in 1875 when Tom Hughes paid tribute to " the brave minister of God, the accomplished scholar and gentleman, and the brilliant author, whose place is empty," and read two letters written to him by Kingsley at the time of the lock-out in the engineering trade in 1852. From Eversley the rector had written :

" The present dodge of the Manchester school is to cry out against us, ' here are a set of mediæval parsons, who want to hinder the independence and self-help of the men, and bring them back to obsolete feudal maxims '—and then, with the most absurd inconsistency, when we set up a co-operative association, to let the men work in the very independence and self-help about which they talk

so fine, they turn round and raise the opposite yell and cry, 'the men cannot be independent of capitalists; these associations will fail *because* they are helping themselves.' Showing that what they mean is, that the men shall be independent of every one but themselves—independent of legislators, parsons, advisers, gentlemen, noblemen, and every one who tries to help them by moral agents—but the slaves of the capitalists, bound to them in a servitude increasing instead of lightening with their numbers. Now, the only way to clear the co-operative cause of this calumny is, to let the men fight their own battle; to prevent anyone saying 'these men are the tools of a few dreamers or fanatics'—which would be just as ruinously blackening to them in the public eyes as it would be to let the cry get abroad, 'this is a socialist movement, destructive of the rights of property—communism, Louis Blanc, the devil, &c., &c.' You know the stupid stuff which the devil gets up on such occasions, having no scruple about calling himself hard names when it suits his purpose to blind and frighten respectable old ladies. But we can help these men in another way, by teaching them how to associate. . . . The only thing, therefore, is association, and we shall find that, by working at that we shall do a hundred times as much good, and get into quite hot water enough. For, if you remark, the masters' press knows that this is its real enemy. It can argue about strikes, but association it is forced to blink by the direct and shameless assertion that every attempt at co-operation in France has led to nothing but failure and misery. We will show them the other side of the picture, but not by public meetings and talk, but by steady work. Co-operative shops will be watched with lynx eyes, and calumniated shamelessly. Our business will be to tell the truth about them, and fight manfully for them with our pens."

And manfully he fought for them with his pen whenever there was need for it. Here is the other extract, from a letter written during another great strike not long afterwards :—

"Oh, those working men! I don't know what to say to them. I have tried to make up my mind on their case, but only a person acquainted with their particular trade can tell whether or not their demands are just; besides, what folly it is to be fighting about all this, when by joining co-operative stores, and associating with the money which goes to their trade unions, they might make their wages go 30 per cent further, and therefore be so much the richer, and become, in time, independent of their masters. Without association, these battles must go on for ever."

Most people not directly connected with trade have come round to Parson Lot's opinion; and that the views of the most distinguished Englishman, with the one exception of his "master" Maurice, who had

joined the ranks of the co-operators, had done much to effect the conversion was recognised by the delegates to the Congress of 1875. For they rose in earnest silence, to endorse the paragraph from the report of their Central Board which declared " we have to give voice to our regret at the loss of another of the old and tried friends of co-operation, who dared to give to it his avowed support at a time when it was the subject of banter to political economists, and to politicians, only ' good soup for the poor,' which they condescended to patronise out of benevolence to those ' humble folks.' We refer to the late Canon Kingsley, whom we had hoped to count for many years among our living friends, and of whom we may still say, that he has become one of that illustrious band who ' being dead yet speaketh.' "

Verily Parson Lot is no longer in a minority of one —for more than four and a half million members of co-operative societies hail him as one who helped to clear away the undergrowth that hampered the progress of the toilers and pioneers through the dark forest of competition into the open country of association. True no great societies stand as his memorial; but his work lives. J. M. Ludlow, at the Co-operative Festival at the Crystal Palace, in 1897, was right when he said : " The movement failed in the course of a few years—commercially but not morally—no movement could be a moral failure which had connected with it such men as Maurice, Kingsley, Hughes, and Neale, and I venture to think that the co-operators of to-day have still a great deal to learn from that movement, both as to the spirit in which it was set on foot by its promoters and as to the attempts at co-operative organisation which it put forth."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ORIGINAL OF ALTON LOCKE.

A REVIEW of "Alton Locke" and some of the sermons of Maurice and Kingsley in the *Quarterly Review* for September, 1851, branded the book as "Revolutionary Literature," and charged the writers with being members of "a clique of educated and clever but wayward-minded men" who, under the name of Christian Socialism, were preaching "doctrines as outrageous as the maddest ravings of furious insanity—as wicked as the most devilish spirit could by possibility have devised." Fifty years later, Frederic Harrison, referring to the same Christian Socialism, observed that:

"Carlyle's *Sartor*, Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, Hughes's *Tom Brown*, and Maurice's *Broad Church Sermons* were the literary forms of the new idea—a cultured, orderly, respectable type of Social 'Democracy."*

This contrast of views is paralleled by the change in public opinion concerning co-operation. The various efforts to organise the supply of, or the market for, the daily needs of the people had been associated before 1848 with revolutionary agitators, freethinking reformers, and other disturbing persons. And co-operation,

"this mild and beneficent business organisation of distribution and production, now so sleepy and conservative, patronised by Bishops, extolled by all that is respectable and secure, appeared sixty years ago as a programme of violent and revolutionary change."†

Mr. Masterman, who wrote thus in 1907, would now probably qualify his "sleepy and conservative"

* Frederic Harrison's "John Ruskin," in English Men of Letters series.
† "Life of F. D. Maurice" by C. F. G. Masterman, 1907.

characterisation, and his brother, now Bishop of Plymouth, would resent the idea of patronage—but the sentence serves to accentuate the contrast. The false attitude of the clergy in Kingsley's day could not vitiate the principle of co-operation. They had forgotten their mission; they had isolated themselves from those who were "members one of another." The Church had got out of touch with the sinners it should have drawn to heaven, and its leaders could not be disappointed if the people they ought to have helped descended into hell. Kingsley sought to guide them aright and make this old earth a preparation for something better. "Alton Locke" was one of the text-books he provided for his generation—and this.

Legend has grown that the original of Alton Locke was Gerald Massey, but there is no evidence. Kingsley began "Alton Locke" in the winter of 1848, six months after he had made the acquaintance of Thomas Cooper, whose cousin, Walter Cooper, was the secretary of the Tailors' Association who compiled the announcement of that workshop which appeared in the "Cheap Clothes and Nasty" pamphlet. It was finished in the winter of 1849-1850, and Mrs. Kingsley made a fair copy so that the MSS could be submitted to J. M. Ludlow and a few other friends. There was difficulty in finding a publisher; even John W. Parker declined. Then Thomas Carlyle was consulted and he commended it to Chapman & Hall, being right glad, as he wrote to Kingsley, "to hear a new explosion or salvo of red-hot shot against the Devil's dung-heap."

On February 12th, 1850 (after the novel was finished), Maurice wrote to Kingsley asking, "Has Ludlow told you of our Chartist poet, Gerald Massey, in Castle Street? He is not quite a Locke, but he has,

I think, some real stuff in him." It is therefore clear that Kingsley had not met Massey when the novel was written, and it is doubtful if he saw him before it was published in August, 1850. Then it was issued anonymously by Chapman & Hall in two volumes of just over 600 pages.

Soon after the appearance of "Alton Locke" Kingsley entered the printing office in Castle Street East in which J. Bedford Leno was working. The printer, who was a Chartist (and incidentally a poet), tendered to the author his gratitude for the service he had rendered Chartism in depicting the Tailor Poet:

"Whether I committed a blunder in my mode of doing this," painfully wrote Leno, "I know not; but I know that his reply was the reverse of what I had expected. His reply was to the effect that I had misunderstood his motives in writing the work in question. I confess at the time I felt hurt, and puzzled. The hurt soon healed, but the puzzling nature of the reply remains a mystery. . . . . Could he have realised how closely the hero of his story resembled myself, how nearly he described me when he pictured Alton Locke as a cross between Burns and a mongrel, how closely my hopes and aspirations resembled those of the fictitious character he had drawn, I feel assured he would not have spoken as he did."*

The truth was Kingsley was not so much concerned with the promotion of Chartism as the exposure of the sweating system. Henry Mayhew's articles in the *Morning Chronicle* had stirred the sluggish English conscience; Kingsley sought by his dramatic power to focus the sensation they had caused in a deliberate effort to promote the self-governing tailors' workshops. That was one object of the book, the moral of which, he told a correspondent, was

"that the working man who tries to get on, to desert his class and rise above it, enters into a lie, and leaves God's path for his own—with consequences."†

* J. Bedford Leno's Autobiography.

† Letter to a country rector quoted by Mrs. Kingsley in Vol. I of "Letters and Memories."

There is firm ground for suggesting Thomas Cooper as having been in the mind of Kingsley in his autobiography of a Cockney Poet—for Cooper was a poet as well as a working shoemaker before he took to the platform. His "Purgatory of Suicides" was written while he was in Stafford Gaol, in 1845. Disraeli had told him how he wished he had seen him before he had finished "Sybil" and gave him an introduction to Harrison Ainsworth, who sent Cooper to Chapman and Hall.* But the Chartist poet had less success with them than had Kingsley on Carlyle's introduction, and they declined, on John Forster's verdict, to publish Cooper's poem. But it was published, and Kingsley read it with distinct and pleasurable surprise, for on June 19th, 1848, he wrote to the author to tell him he had been possessed "by a desire to thrust myself, at all risks, into your acquaintance."

That was the beginning of a close friendship and long correspondence renewed from time to time. Kingsley's interest in Cooper's writings had begun a little earlier, for Parson Lot's first letter to the Chartists† on May 13th, 1848, told how he bought a Chartist paper full of unseemly appeals to ignorance and went on—

> "What must the author of that noble poem, 'The Purgatory of Suicides,' feel when he sees the cause for which he suffered defiled by such stuff as this? What is the use of brilliant language about peace and the majesty of order, and universal love, though it may all be printed in letters a foot long, when it runs in the same team with ferocity, railing, and one-eyed excitement talking itself into a passion like a street woman."

During the time that Kingsley had been going to London for his Queen's College lectures, Thomas Cooper was attending a weekly meeting of Chartists

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* "The Life of Thomas Cooper—by Himself."

† "Politics for the People."

and other reformers at the Crown Tavern, near St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet Street, at which Willie Thom, the weaver poet of Inverury sang his own Scottish songs, and Walter Cooper (a cousin of Thomas), the secretary of the Tailors' Association, and Thomas Shorter, who became secretary of the Working Men's College, were regular attenders. Walter Cooper had been discovered by Ludlow and was responsible for gathering the workmen to the Christian Socialist conferences at the Cranbourne Coffee Tavern in the spring of 1849. Doubtless he drew some of the Crown Tavern coterie, including his cousin. So that Kingsley probably heard him in debate in addition to the opportunities of private conversation and correspondence. That Cooper had real sympathy with Kingsley's idea of workmen's associations is proved by an article thereon he wrote for his own *Cooper's Journal*, February 16th, 1850, in which he said, "This week commences an enterprise in London which is of far deeper importance than all that is *likely* to be done in Parliament for the whole session."

The identity of Thomas Cooper with Alton Locke seems completely established by a study of the former's Autobiography with the life of the latter. Neither Thomas Cooper nor Alton Locke could remember his father. To the former the "Pilgrim's Progress" was his "book of books"; "the only books which I knew," said Locke of his childhood, "were the 'Pilgrim's Progress' and the Bible. The former was my Shakespeare, my Dante, my Vedas, by which I explained every fact and phenomenon of life." Cooper got work as a shoemaker, and read Byron and Burns; Locke became a tailor and read Byron and Bethune. Both had dismal experience of the narrow

creeds of their boyish days. Cooper got his first books from a travelling bookseller; Locke found the bookshop of Sandy Mackaye, who lent him Milton's "Paradise Lost." Cooper committed most of that to memory, and read Virgil's "Æneid" with "a love that has lasted." Locke "read and re-read Milton's 'Poems' and Virgil's 'Æneid' for six more months at every spare moment." He sat up from "midnight till dawn," reading and working; so did Cooper, who "not unfrequently swooned away," the result of studying, "wrapped up in my mother's cloak" for warmth. Locke had no fire and sat with "my feet wrapped up in the bedclothes." Both read Paley's "Evidences."

There are sufficient parallel passages from the "Life of Thomas Cooper, written by himself," to prove how largely Kingsley drew on the actual experience and development of Cooper for his own hero. He pictured him in a social grade with which Kingsley had no acquaintance; but he introduced himself to Cooper to get to know the mind of the workman—and he questioned and drew from his workman friend the whole story of his experiences. There was also the added interest that Cooper spent his boyhood at Gainsborough in the country that Kingsley knew and loved; and commenced as a journalist by contributing to a paper at Stamford—where he also lived awhile—four miles from Barnack. There the novelist had lived as a boy. Scattered throughout "Alton Locke" are direct references to Cooper which show how deeply he had impressed himself on the author. Locke reflects on the generosity of his uncle in finding him work:—

"For what could he make me but a tailor—or a shoemaker? A pale, consumptive, rickety, weakly boy, all forehead and no muscle—have not clothes and shoes been from time immemorial the

appointed work of such ? The fact that that weakly frame is generally compensated by a proportionally increased activity of brain, is too unimportant to enter into the calculations of the great King Laissez-faire. Well, my dear Society, it is you that suffer for the mistake, after all, more than we . . . If Thomas Cooper had passed his first five-and-twenty years at the plough tail instead of the shoemaker's awl, many words would have been left unsaid which, once spoken, working men are not likely to forget."

When Alton Locke's poems were published he was " classed (and heaven knows that the comparison was dearer to me than all the applause of the wealthy) with the Corn Law Rhymer, and the author of the ' Purgatory of Suicides ' (Cooper)."

Probably Cooper introduced Kingsley to Willie Thom, the Scottish poet, who came to London and, as Sandy Mackaye observed, was left " to die in a ditch." If my assumption is correct, it answers the questioning attitude of Carlyle with regard to Mackaye. He wondered how Kingsley had managed him, " his very dialect is as if a native had done it." Kingsley had not been to Scotland, and " puir Thom " may have helped him more than we know. For he was steeped in the democratic poets of his day. In the chapter on " First Love " and " Poetry and Poets " is another reference to his hero, and also to a Lancashire poet—J. Critchley Prince—and Thomas Hood.

" Here and there a Thomas Cooper, sitting in Stafford gaol, after a youth spent in cobbling shoes, vents his treasures of classic and historic learning in a ' Purgatory of Suicides,' or a Prince becomes a poet of the poor, no less for having fed his boyish fancies with the ' Arabian Nights ' and the ' Pilgrim's Progress.' . . . Which of poor Hood's lyrics have an equal chance of immortality with ' The Song of the Shirt ' and ' The Bridge of Sighs,' rising, as they do, right out of the depths of that Inferno, sublime from their very simplicity."

When Locke's poems were to be published he consented to the omission of certain passages of a strong political tendency. Cooper was asked by John Forster, the literary adviser of Chapman & Hall, to refrain from

styling himself a Chartist on the title page.* They both became "hack-writers" for the press, and attended meetings of the agitators in London, Locke listening to the "Owenite 'it's-nobody's-fault'" harangues, and Cooper hearing Robert Owen open his new institution in John Street, Tottenham Court Road, in 1839—to which Kingsley was invited after his inhibition by the Bishop following his sermon in the neighbouring St. John's Church, Charlotte Street, in 1851. During his imprisonment in Stafford gaol the chaplain told Cooper he could offer freedom and opportunity for going to the University of Cambridge if he would give up politics; something of the kind happened to Locke on a visit to his cousin at Cambridge when he was invited to go in for a sizarship and "take orders." Both declined, and they each got into prison at open-air meetings, where their speeches were alleged to have led to riots. The challenging of jurymen, the endeavours of political friends to secure the services of lawyers, the appeal of each to the judge is almost identical in the novel of "Alton Locke" and the autobiography of Cooper.

The parallel is continued in the prison experiences —so closely that it is safe to conclude that Cooper's recollections given to Parson Lot were the foundation of the chapter on "Prison Thoughts." Locke reflected on "imprisonment as the worst possible remedy for my disease that could have been devised. What could prison do for me, but embitter and confirm all my prejudices?" Locke emerged from gaol "a rebel and a conspirator." Cooper went forth with

* Evidently, the incident was repeated in 1851 when Chapman, talking to Cooper about the popular reception of "Alton Locke," urged him to write a Chartist novel. This he did; but it was declined. Subsequently it was issued by Messrs. Routledge as "The Family Feud."

"atheistic reasonings becoming habitual"—despite the tracts, written by good men, with which he had been deluged by the chaplain. Each had the bitter feeling of being denounced by old associates, and Alton Locke had "no heart" to write about the Tenth of April, 1848, on which, too, Cooper was silent.

Thus the original of Alton Locke can be traced, almost in detail; only in his sketches of a different social grade did Kingsley get beyond envisaging Thomas Cooper in his novel. But the similitude can be carried further. In the Dreamland with which the book nears its close is a picture of co-operation as a handmaiden of the Almighty in assuaging the world's tribulations by "enfranchised and fraternal labour" because "the nation is neither the few, nor the many, but the all." Six years after the novel was published Thomas Cooper was in a bad way financially, as well as spiritually. On the latter matters they corresponded for some months,* as to the former Kingsley consulted Maurice, Hughes, Ludlow, and Furnivall, who saw W. E. Forster (whom both Cooper and Kingsley subsequently visited in Wharfedale) with a view to securing employment at a Government office. Lord Mount-Temple was at the then Board of Health and gave Cooper a place as copyist of letters at the remuneration of seventy words a penny. He continued at that for nearly two years, and then returned to lecturing. In his autobiography he described how he saw an improvement in the condition of the people.

"In our old Chartist time Lancashire workmen were in rags by thousands, and many of them often lacked food. . . . *Now* (1872) you will see no

* Kingsley's letters to Cooper are given in the "Memories and Letters," Vol. II.

such groups in Lancashire. But you will hear well-dressed working men talking, as they walk with their hands in their pockets, of 'Co-ops' (co-operative stores) and their shares in them." And thus the original of Alton Locke came to see, as had Parson Lot, that the "remedy must be in association, co-operation, self-sacrifice for the sake of one another." And that is the moral of "Alton Locke," which brought its author the gratitude of the working classes as well as the fierce denunciation of those who "grind the faces of the poor." The novel also brought him £150.

"Up, up, up, and up!
Face your game and play it!"
The night is past—behold the sun!
The cup is full, the web is spun,
The Judge is set, the doom begun;
Who shall stay it?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

KINGSLEY'S UNFINISHED NOVEL.

IN 1915—forty years after the death of her father—"Lucas Mallet" (Mrs. W. Harrison), the daughter of Kingsley, made a remarkable discovery when going through some papers which had belonged to her father. Mrs. Kingsley died in 1892, but not till 23 years later were all the novelist-parson's literary remains thoroughly examined. It was known that he had begun two novels—one a "Pilgrimage of Grace" dealing with the suppression of the monasteries, the other "The History of a Wise Woman in the New Forest"—but they were not far advanced. Then 150 foolscap pages of a third were discovered. Between 50 and 60 of the pages were consecutive; the others contained notes and stray incidents to be woven into "The Tutor's Story." "Lucas Mallet" set to work to complete the novel, and scattered throughout the chapters are traces of the virile Kingsley of a period before "The Water Babies." The scenes are familiar —Yorkshire (suggested by acquaintance with the quaint village of Middleham in Wensleydale and a visit paid to W. E. Forster in Wharfedale in 1858, when he wrote home that "Yorkshire is the most noble and beautiful of counties"), Cambridge, and London, which "still offers a not altogether satisfactory example of applied sanitary science." Sandy Mackaye is recalled in an equally observant and wonderful Scotch gardener who seems, somehow, to throw forth the author's

regard for the aristocracy, as the questioning of the tutor from Cambridge goes to show.

"You seem," inquires the tutor, "to take as much delight in this garden as if it were your own."

"And why not? When Adam was put into Eden, to dress it and keep it, was it the less delightsome to him because, in the ultimate, he kenned it belonged to Almighty God alone?"

"But surely you are denied the incentive to work which comes from the sense of possession?"

"Oh, that's a carnal superstition, unworthy o' the true artist who rejoices in the work for its own sake. And what's more, he'd be just a fool if he took the land for his ain; for how would he carry out his work upon it? It's just the aristocracy which enable him to do it. They are, so to say, the bankers o' the artist, and find, at his demand, rough material, capital, a' that he wants except his ain brains. Hoo-oo-o, when I was a bit noisy Radical callant in a debating society in Glasgow, I'd talk roaring words enough about the cold shade o' the aristocracy. But when I got under it, I found it just a very warm shelter, where I could wark and study, and devote myself purely to my science, wi'out fretting after the daily bread. An' not I only—but, see here, I've under me twenty, thirty hands learning their trade more or less. Whaur would they be but for the aristocracy? A bit turnip-field, putting into the people's pocket thirty shillings an acre per annum for labour. It puts now nearer three hundred pounds. I've two young men under me, rising botanists, that will be fit in seven years to take a place equal to mine. What wad they ha' been doing, but for the aristocracy? Earning twelve shillings a week at the plough tail like brute beasts that have no understanding. And in their old age—see again, there—there's a dizen auld hirpling bodies weeding and sweeping, sweeping and weeding, wi' good grey duffle to their backs. Whaur wad they be but for the aristocracy? In the poorhouse. Hoo-oo-o, I suppose ye're a Radical, being fresh fra college. I'll mak' a Tory o' ye, ere ye've been here long."

"The good man has not quite succeeded, I am afraid, in making a Tory of me, but he set me thinking, and not in vain."

"A Tutor's Story" is rarely included in the lists of Kingsley's works; Lucas Mallet saved it from the fate of "Edwin Drood." Yet some of its patches are tinged with the Kingsley purple; and we can see him in Lord Hartover's reflection that "our English institution of fox-hunting plays so large a part in country life, bringing landlord and tenant together on equal terms, and establishing a friendly and wholesome relation invaluable as between class and class." And

an echo of the Dulwich gallery and the letters on the National Gallery seems to linger with the reflection that " the license which the upper classes permit as to pictures and statues is far less hurtful to them than the prudery of the middle class. You must either destroy such things or accustom young people to them. The former is impossible. The latter is, therefore, the wiser and perhaps the purer method." All that is true Kingsleyan common-sense.

Evidently Kingsley laid aside his novel unfinished because it was becoming too real. He wrote " Hypatia " to turn his thoughts from present distress —it wrought so strongly upon his sensitive nature. And I surmise " The Tutor's Story " was becoming too full of the sycophancies and manœuvring he observed in the movements that swerved about him. Kingsley had told Macmillan* about 1859 of a proposed novel dealing with Alcibiades, who was corrupted by wealth. When, later, the publisher asked Kingsley about it he replied, " the truth is, Macmillan, that I now know too much ever to write the book. I have been too much behind the scenes (*i.e.*, of court, fashionable, diplomatic life), and should inevitably do what is most wrong from a novelist, introduce personal portraits, paint real calamities." Something of the kind crept into " The Tutor's Story," and although Lucas Mallet finished the novel, one had almost wished it had remained—like " Edwin Drood "—an enigma. The work was completed out of filial devotion rather than complete sympathy with the thoughts and passions of its author.

* From " Letters of Malcolm Kingsley Macmillan " (Kingsley's godson), printed for private circulation in 1893.

CHAPTER XIX.

AS CANON OF THE CHURCH.

KINGSLEY was the last of the Canons of Middleham, one of the quaintest villages in Yorkshire. Its castle, cross, and bull ring testify to its ancient importance. For a century it has been a great horse-training centre, and when Kingsley preached there in 1845 he found eighty horses with their jockeys and grooms crowding the streets. That was his only visit. His host was Thomas Topham, a cousin of the father of the present Dean of Middleham, the Rev. Henry G. Topham, who tells me that his own impression is that Dean Wood (whose associations with the Collegiate church began in 1814, and who died in London in the 'eighties) met Kingsley at Squire Topham's, and offered him the stall of St. Anthony; but there is no record of the religious ceremony which would have confirmed the installation. The Rev. P. A. L. Wood, who was appointed to the stall of St. George in 1844, was the son of the Dean and had been a college friend of Kingsley's.

Middleham was founded as a collegiate church by Richard Duke of Gloucester in 1448. He made over two manors in Norfolk for the maintenance of the College, but the deed of gift was not completed when he was slain at Bosworth Field, so the College was never finished, although the Dean and Canons reigned till an Act of Parliament about 1850 abolished "these Royal peculiars." In 1857, all the old documents were

taken away by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the present Dean has been unable to discover any record of Charles Kingsley being installed as Canon.

The fact that Kingsley's letter home on his one visit makes no mention of anything but a sermon gives colour to the view of the Rev. H. G. Topham that, although the offer of the canonry was made, the actual appointment never took place. That it was intended Kingsley should have a stall in the church is, however, clear from documents published by the sub-dean, the Rev. W. Atthill, in 1847, in which both Wood and Kingsley are mentioned as canons, the dates of appointment being 1844 and 1845 respectively.

But Kingsley is unknown to the present generation, and when in September of last year I visited this ancient settlement in Wensleysdale I could find no one who even recognised the name. A typical stableman whom I found sitting on the steps of the cross was asked if he knew Kingsley. He reflected awhile, and then asked me where he was trained. I answered "at Cambridge." It threw no light into his mental chamber; suddenly, however, my ignorance dawned upon him, and he retorted "you mean Newmarket. I was at Newmarket as a boy, and sometimes went to Cambridge, where there was a lot of big schools." Then I explained that Kingsley had been a clergyman. "Oh," was the response, "I thought he was a horse!" Kingsley, who loved horses, would have enjoyed the misunderstanding. Once he was chatting with a friend at Chester and remarked, "What nice creatures dogs and horses are. What a pity they haven't souls!" He was promptly asked, "How do you know they haven't?" "Ah!" replied Kingsley, "if you take that line I am much inclined to go with you."

Kingsley lived long enough to be recognised by the Church to which he was devoted, and in November, 1869, was installed as Canon of Chester, where in four years he infused a spirit of mutuality in education, science, and religion that still flows through the Chester Society of Natural Science, Literature, and Art. Six months before going into residence in the city he was devising plans for popularising natural science. On his own birthday, June 12th, 1870, a botany class was commenced which developed into the Chester Society that has now over 1,200 members, the spirit of Kingsley permeating all its activities. He stipulated that he should have a class of a dozen earnest men ; but the ladies wanted to join, and the Canon, fearing they would prove a distracting influence, suggested, " Let Mr. John Price form a class and take the ladies ; he is the nicest man, and should have the nicest pupils."

Kingsley was troubled by ladies who swarmed round his serious studies in a quizzical, curious sort of way. Mr. Alfred Walker, one of the society's pioneers, tells how, in the early days, Kingsley, as President, had arranged a short natural history excursion for all the members, with a longer tramp for the men and himself. But the dear ladies would not part with their Canon, and the longer walk was abandoned, to their joy. A sympathetic friend condoled with Kingsley, " Yes," he replied, " those good ladies spoilt my day ; but what can you do ? When they get to a certain age you must either treat them like duchesses—or sh—sh—*shoot* them ! " No wonder he made a deep impression on the city, for such a breezy leader from classroom to nature was a rarity among church dignitaries sixty years ago. As Sir William Herdman, the Emeritus Professor of Natural History at Liverpool University,

said at the Jubilee meeting of the Society in 1921, Kingsley "had a great love of Nature and a wide knowledge of the natural sciences—especially Botany, Geology, and Zoology—and for preference, in that order; and he was a born teacher of men. An actual professor of modern history for some years (1860-69) at Cambridge, he was an unofficial professor of many subjects to the end of his days."*

At Eversley he was the parish priest tending the sick, comforting the mothers, and admonishing those whom he thought tired too quickly; at Chester he was the leader of men, and brought the Cathedral into close relationship with the civic life. When he saw the old city turned into a vicious pandemonium during the race week, the fighting instinct that had roused Parson Lot to write his "Letters to the Chartists" inspired Canon Kingsley to publish a letter "to the young men of Chester" on betting, in which he divided the human race into three parts—

1. Honest men: Who mean to do right; and do it.
2. Knaves: Who mean to do wrong; and do it.
3. Fools: Who mean to do whichever of the two is the pleasanter.

And these last may be divided again into—

Black fools: Who would rather do wrong; but dare not; unless it is the fashion.

White fools: Who would rather do right; but dare not; unless it is the fashion.

And then he told how he had turned his back on race-courses because "I found that they tempted me to betting, and that betting tempted me to company, and to passions, unworthy not merely of a scholar and a gentleman, but of an honest and rational bargeman or collier." So he spoke and wrote with all his strength—going to Crewe to tell the railway men of

* Report of Chester Society of Natural Science, Literature, and Art, 1921–22

"The Aristocracy of the Future," pleading for the ragged schools at Liverpool, and preaching on "Human soot" as the production of the present social system in which "capital is accumulated more rapidly by wasting a certain amount of human life, human health, human morals," and conceiving a time when civilisation would see that "a man is, after all, the most precious and useful thing in the earth, and that no cost spent on the development of human beings can possibly be thrown away." Such was the new teaching that radiated from the venerable city of Chester—teaching that, had Kingsley been but typical of his clerical contemporaries, would not now be needed in a country where material considerations still hold sway.

There was sorrow throughout Chester when news of his preferment to Westminster reached the city in March, 1873. For although he had led, it had been with the love of comrades rather than the discipline of the school. At the end of the last lecture of his course on natural history a member of the class, in proposing a vote of thanks, remarked "what a joy it must be to the Canon to be able to draw upon his great knowledge——" "My dear sir, stop," the Canon interjected; "if I know anything at all it is this: the depths of my own ignorance."

The Chester Society of Natural Science, Literature, and Art continues to help in dispelling ignorance by encouraging local research in all the subjects in which Kingsley was interested. It has its sections—botanical, zoological, geological, natural philosophy, microscopical, photographic, literary, astronomical, geographical, and art—with a natural history museum and library. Kingsley memorial prizes not exceeding £10 are offered annually for local research, and prizes and

certificates given in the secondary and public elementary schools of Chester and the district. Thus the influence of the Canon permeates the city he loved and the society he founded. Its present rules are little different from those of Kingsley's day.

When Gladstone offered him a stall in Westminster Abbey, in March, 1873, he "had to take it for my children's sake," and regarded with thankfulness the prospect of spending his old age "with leisure to cultivate myself and write, if I will, deliberately but not for daily bread!" Even then the end was nearing; Kingsley's strength was waning.

In 1874 he visited America, where he was eagerly welcomed as a representative Englishman. But the strain was heavy upon him, and he spent a summer of sickness at Colorado Springs. There he wrote his last poem, the ballad with the plaintive haunting cry for "poor Lorraine, Lorrée." He returned home fatigued and weary. Still he strove with the old spirit of faith to do his duty—at Eversley and Westminster. On November 29th he preached in the Abbey on the coming of the Christ "who may whisper to you 'Come unto Me, thou weary and heavy-laden heart, and I will give thee rest.'" That was his last message. He left the service, exhausted. Returning to his Hampshire Rectory he took to his bed. His wife was seriously ill in another room. Their pathetic pencilled notes continued till the early days of the new year; then the spirit faded away. Once he murmured "no more fighting—no more fighting," and on January 23rd, 1875, he heard the whisper, and entered into the Unknown to which he had long looked "forward with an intense and reverent curiosity."

CHAPTER XX.

THE SPIRIT THAT LIVES.

KINGSLEY'S place among the formative forces of the land is established—and will continue. It may have its ebb and flow, like the deep seas he loved. But he reached the fundamental instincts of the race in "Westward Ho," "Hypatia," and "Alton Locke"; he touches the finest chords of love and laughter in "The Water Babies"; he lifted us into an enchanted air in his lyrics; and his Life stands out as belonging to the great Brotherhood of Men.

He was a Pioneer. The clergy of his day looked at the world's problems from the topmost steps of their pulpits. Kingsley was one of the first to get down into the pews. Visiting the north of England in 1841, Lord Ashley (Earl of Shaftesbury) observed that "the clergy here, as usual, are cowed by capital and labour." Kingsley turned valiantly to each. The hostility of his own rank was openly expressed; the prejudice and suspicion of those he sought to help had to be encountered. His sincerity carried him through. Time has shaken off the attacks that were continually made upon him. And his memory now stands foursquare to the winds of opposition, and secure in the gratitude of those who recognise how fervently he battled for "a fair field" for all.

This example of a chivalrous champion of the distressed is a heritage for those who live in a clearer day. Beyond the man, we have his poetry—so beautiful in

its lyrical quality, and in the exaltation of homeliness. It reveals his understanding of nature, his plumbing of the human heart, his simple soul, his trust in the future of the race. His songs have woven themselves into the national literature. Kingsley wrote to a friend that "my poetry is all of me that will last, except, perhaps, my 'Hypatia.'" His poetry was his soul's outburst and carried him beyond tribulation into regions of the loftiest beauty and the sweetest haunting music.

It was characteristic that in his first sermon in Westminster Abbey he should think of one of the sins of omission on the part of the community, for it was to him "a disgraceful fact that there is not, through the whole of London, a single portico or covered place in which people can take refuge [on the Sabbath day] during a shower. Where they do take refuge the publican knows but too well." Thus from the national venerated fane he preached tolerance, and thought for the neglected and forgotten.

Already the environment in which "Alton Locke" was envisaged has nearly disappeared before the social consciousness that Kingsley awakened. The working men and women are now the governors of their own land, and their own destiny. They need, more than ever, the education he regarded as the right of everyone.

"The State has no right to demand that the physical life of the child shall be preserved, and yet to allow its far more important and valuable life—its intellectual and moral life—to be destroyed."*

Kingsley was a prophet—warning, advising, and preparing the people for the Present and the Future. "I have given my readers 'Yeast'; if they be what

* From presidential address of Kingsley at the Education Section of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science meeting at Bristol, 1869.

I take them for they will be able to bake with it themselves."

Changing conditions are relegating some of his novels into the library of historical romances. But they have their value. They tell of the England from which we have emerged—thanks, in a measure, to Parson Lot. His life was a tragic buoyancy. He lived vehemently and wore himself out before his time. Had the end come when he was forty years old the world would have acclaimed him a genius, and his place in literature would have been an eternal problem. Between 1846 and 1856 his greatest novels, poems, essays, lectures, and sermons were composed. Then the clouds of weariness, illness, disappointment, and controversy obscured his creative powers, and Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes) declared he "literally *rowed* himself to death."*

All that was mortal of Kingsley was committed to the grave in the "little spot, the parish, to which thoughts and prayers are for ever turning"; but the spirit of Parson Lot lives on—and will continue to permeate this old England of ours "so long as there is a wrong left un-redressed on earth, and a man or woman left to say, 'I will redress that wrong, or spend my life in the attempt.'"

* Letter to H. A. Bright in "Life of Lord Houghton."

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